

BELL'S EDITION.
THE POETS of GREAT BRITAIN
COMPLETE FROM
CHAUCER to CHURCHILL.



CHAUCER VOL. XI.

For why he hings his head adowne
And with a dedly throwl hit towe.

Chaucer's Dream.

Richard del.

Woolf sculp.

London Printed for John Bell British Library April 18th 1783.



Gal 11 Da

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFF. CHAUCER.
IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.
THE MISCELLANEOUS PIÉCES

From Urry's Edition 1721,
THE CANTERBURY TALES

From Tyrwhitt's Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----
Of ditees and of songes glade,
The which he---made,
The londe fullfilled is over all.

GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Bretayne---
Whom all this londe schulde of ryght preferre,
Sith of our langage he was the lode-sterre---
That made first to dystylle and rayne
The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence
Into our tunge thurgh his excellence.

LYDGATE.

The honour of English tong is dede---
My mayster CHAUCER, flour of eloquence,
Mirroure of fructuous entendement,
Univerfel fadir in science---
This londis verray tresour and richesse---
The firste synder of our fayre langage.

OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,
Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,
In eloquence balme, condict and diall,
Mylky fountane, clere strand, and rois riall,
Of fresche endite throw Albioun iland braid.

DOWGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! rose of rethouris all,
As in oure tounge flour imperial
That raise in Brittain evir, quha reldis right
Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royail,
The fresche enamilt termes celestiaall:
This mater couth haif illuminit full bricht,
Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,
Surmounting every tounge terrestriall
As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnight.

DUNBAR.

VOL. XI.
EDINBURG:
AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.
Anno 1782.



THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.
VOL. XI.

CONTAINING HIS

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES, *viz.*

BREAMES,
ASSEMBLE OF FOULES,
PYTE IS DEDE,

|| CUCKOWE & NIGH TINGALE,
|| GODE COUNSAILE,
|| A, B, C,

&c. &c. &c.

But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale fain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath sayd hem in swiche English as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another----
Who so that wol his large Volume seke. TALES, *ver.* 4465.

Dan CHAUCER, well of English undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal head-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geoffrey, in whose gentle spright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilst he lived was the soveraigne head
Of shepherds all-----

SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
To us discovers day from far;
His light those mists and clouds dissolv'd
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he descending to the shades
Darkness again the age invades.

DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who first with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers---His legends blithe
He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
The fashions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying----
Him who in times-----

Dark and untaught began with charming verse
To tame the rudeness of his native land.

AKENSIDE.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTIN.

Anno 1782.



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MISCELLANIES.

CHAUCEER'S DREAME,

*Never before the year 1597 printed, that which heretofore
hath gone under the name of his Dreame is The Book of the
Duchesse, or, The Death of Blanch Duchesse of Lancaster.*

WHEN Flora, the quene of Plefaunce,
Had whole achievid th' obeyfaunce
Of the fresh and the new seson
Thorow out evèry region,
And with her mantle whole covert 5
That wintir made had discouvert,
Of avinture withoutin light
In May I lay upon a night
Alone, and on my lady thought,
And how the Lord that her ywrought 10

Chaucer's Dreame] This Dreame, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a covert report of the mariage of John of Gaunt, the king's sonne, with Blanch the daughter of Henry Duke of Lancaster, who after long love (during the time wherof the poet faineth them to be dead) were in the end by consent of friends happily married, figured by a bird bringing in her bill an hearbe which restored them to lyfe againe. Here also is shewed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who although she was a stranger was notwithstanding so well liked and loved of the Lady Blanch and her lord, as Chaucer himselfe also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage betweene them. *Urry.*

Couth well entayle in imagery,
 And shewid had grete maistiry,
 When he in so litil a space
 Made such a body and a face,
 So grete beautie with swich fetures, 15
 More than in othir creätures;
 And in my thoughtis as I lay
 Within a lodge out of the way,
 Beside a well in a forest,
 Where aftir hunting I toke rest, 20
 Nature and kind so in me wrought
 That halfe on slepe they me ybrought,
 And gan to dreme to my thinking
 With mind of knowliche like making,
 For what I dremid, as me thought, 25
 I saw it, and I sleptin nought,
 Wherefore is yet my full beleve
 That some gode spirit that ilke eve,
 By mene of some curious port,
 Bare me where I saw payne and sport; 30
 But whether it were I woke or slept
 Well wot I oft I lough and wept;
 Wherefore I woll in remembraunce
 Put whole the payne and the plesaunce,
 Which was to me axin and hele; 35
 Would God ye wist it everydele,
 Or at the lest ye might o night
 Of such anothir have a fight,

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Although it were to you a payne,
Yet on the mo'row ye would be fayne, 40
And wish that it might long endure,
Then might ye say ye had gode cure,
For he that dremes and wenes he se
Mochil the bettir yet maie he
Ywit what, and of whom, and where, 45
And eke the lasse it woll hindere
To thinke I se this with mine eene,
Iwis this may not dremè kene,
But signe or a signiffaunce
Of hasty thing founing plesaunce; 50
For on this wise upon a night,
As ye have herd, withoutin light,
Not all wakyng ne full on slepe,
About such hour as lovirs wepe
And crie aftir ther ladies grace, 55
Befell me tho this wondir cace,
Which ye shall here, and all the wise,
So wholly as I can devise:
In playne English evill writtin,
For slepe writir, well ye wittin, 60
Excusid is though he do mis
More than one whiche that waking is,
Wherefore here of your gentilnesse
I you requyre my boistousnesse
Ye lettin passe as thingè rude, 65
And herith what I woll conclude,

And of the' endityng taketh no hede,
 Ne of the termes, so God you spede,
 But let all passe as nothing were,
 For thus befell, as you shall here.

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Within an yle methought I was
 Where wall and yate was all of glasse,
 And so was closid round about
 That levelesse none come in ne out,
 Uncouth and straungè to behold,
 For evèry yate of fine gold
 A thousand fanis aie turning
 Entunid had, and briddes singing
 Divers, and on eche fane a paire
 With opin mouth again the aire;
 And of a sute were all the toures,
 Subtily corvin astir floures,
 Of uncouth colours during aye,
 That never ben none sene in May,
 With many a small turret hie;
 But man on live could I non sie,
 Ne creturis, save ladies play,
 Which werin such of ther array
 That as me thought of godelihed
 They passeden all and womanhed,
 For to behold them daunce and sing
 It semid like none erthly thing,
 Such was ther uncouth countinaunce
 In every play of right usaunce,

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And of one age evèrichone 95
 They semid all save onely one,
 Which had of yeris suffisaunce,
 70 For she might neythir sing ne daunce,
 But yet her countenaunce was so glad,
 As she so fewe yeris had had 100
 As any ladie that was there,
 And as litil it did hér dere
 75 Of lustines to laugh and tale
 As she had full stuffid a male
 Of disportis and new playis; 105
 Faire had she ben in her dayis,
 And maistresse semid well to be
 80 Of all that lusty companie,
 And so she might, I you ensure,
 For one the conningist creture 110
 She was, and so said everichone,
 That er her knew, there failid none,
 85 For she was sober, and well avised,
 And from evèry fault disguised,
 And nothing used but faith and truth; 115
 That she n'as young it was grete ruth,
 For every where and in ech place
 90 She govirnid her, that in grace
 She stode alway with pore and riche,
 That at a word was none her liche, 120
 Ne halfe so' able maistres to be
 To such a lusty companie.

Befell me so, when I avised
 Yhad the yle that me suffised,
 And whole th' estate evèry where 125
 That in the lusty yle was there,
 Which was more wondir to devise
 Than is the joyous paradise,
 I dare well say, for floure ne tre,
 Ne thing wherein plesaunce might be, 130
 There saylid none, for every wight,
 Had they desirid day and night
 Richis and hele, beauty and ese,
 With every thing that them might plesse,
 But thinke and have, it cost no more; 135
 In such a country there before
 Had I not ben ne herdin tell
 That livis creature might dwell.
 And when I had thus all about
 The yle avised thoroughout 140
 The state, and how they were arayed,
 In my hert I wexe well appayed,
 And in my selfe I me assured
 That in my body' I was well ured,
 Sithin I might have such a grace 145
 'To se the ladies and the place,
 Which were so faire, I you ensure,
 That to my dome though that Nature
 Would evir strive and do her paine
 She should not con ne mow attaine 150

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The left feture for to amend,
 Though she would all her conning spende,
 That unto beautie might availe,
 It were but paine and lost travaile,
 Such part in ther nativitie 155
 Was then alarged of beautie;
 And eke they had a thing notable
 Unto ther deth ay durable,
 And was, that ther beauty should dure,
 Which was nevyr sene in creture, 160
 Save onely there (as I trow)
 It ne hath not be wist ne know,
 Wherefore I praise with ther conning
 That during beautie, richè thing,
 Had they ben of ther lives certaine 165
 They had ben quite of every paine.
 And when I wend thus all have sene
 The state, the riches, that might bene,
 That me thought impossible were
 To se one thing more than was there 170
 That to beautie or glad conning
 Serve or availe might any thing,
 All sodainly as I there stode
 This lady, that couth so much gode,
 Unto me came with smiling chere, 175
 And said, *Benedicite!* this yere
 Saw I nevyr man here but you;
 Tell me how ye come hidir now, 180

And your name, and where that ye dwell,
 And whom ye seke eke mote ye tell, 180
 And how ye come be to this place;
 The soth well told may cause you grace,
 And ellis ye mote prisoner be
 Unto the ladies here and me
 That have the governaunce of this yle; 185
 And with that word she gan to smile,
 And so did all the lusty rout
 Of ladies that stode her about.
 Madame, (quod I) this night ypast
 Lodgid I was and slepte fast 190
 In a forest beside a well,
 And now am here, how should I tell?
 Wot I not by whose ordinance,
 But onely Fortune's purveiance,
 Which puttith many, as I gesse, 195
 To travaile, paine, and businesse,
 And lettith nothing for ther truth,
 But some sleeth else, and that is ruth,
 Wherefore I doubt her brittilnes,
 Her variance and unstedfastnes, 200
 So that I am as yet afraid,
 And of my beyng here amaid,
 For wondir thing it semith me
 Thus many fresh ladies to se
 So faire, so cunning, and so yong, 205
 And no man dwelling them among;

80 N'ot I not how I hidir come,
 Madame, (quod I) this all and some :
 What shoud I faine a long processe
 To you, that seme such a princeffe? 210
 What plesith you commaund or say,
 Here I am redy to obay
 85 To my powir, and all fulfill,
 And prisionir bide at your will,
 Till you duly enformid be 215
 Of evèry thing ye aske me.

190 This lady there right well apaid
 Me by the hande ytoke, and said,
 Welcome, prisioner adventurus,
 Right glad am I ye have said thus, 220
 And for ye doubt me to displese
 I will assay to do you ese :
 195 And with that word, ye, right anon,
 She and the ladies everichon
 Assemblid, and to counsaile went, 225
 And astir that sone for me sent,
 And to me said on this manere,
 200 All word for word, as ye shall here :

To se you here us thinke marvaile,
 And how withoutin bote or faile, 230
 By any subtilty or wyle,
 Ye get have entre in this yle,
 But not for that yet shall ye se
 That we gentill women ybe.

Loth to displein any wight, 235
 Notwithstanding our gretè right;
 And for ye shall well undirfiond
 The oldè custome of this lond,
 Which hath continued many yere,
 Ye shall well wete that with us here 240
 Ye may not bide, for causis twaine
 Which we be purposed you to saine.

The one is this; our ordinance,
 Which is of long continuance,
 Ne woll not, sothly we you tell, 245
 That no man here among us dwell,
 Wherefore ye mote nedis retourne;
 In no wise may you here sojourne.

The othir is eke, that our quene
 Out of the relme, as ye maie sene, 250
 Is, and may be to us a charge
 If we let goe you here at large,
 For whichè cause the more we doubt
 To doe a fault while she is out,
 Or suffir that may be noysance 255
 Againe our old accustomance.

And when I had these causis twaine
 Yherd, o God! what mochil paine
 All sodainly about mine hert
 There came at onis, and how smert! 260
 In creping soft as who should stele
 Or doe me robbe of all mine hele,

And made me in my thought so fraid
 That in courage I stode dismaid;
 And standing thus, as was my grace, 265
 A lady came more than apace,
 With a huge preiſe her about,
 And told how that the quene without
 Was arivid, and would come in;
 Well were they that hidir might twin; 270
 They hied so they would not abide
 The bridiling ther horse to ride,
 By five, by sixe, by two, by thre;
 There was not one abode with me;
 The quene to mete everichone 275
 They went, and bode with me not one;
 And I went aftir a soft pase,
 Imagining how to purchase
 Grace of the quene there to abide
 Till gode fortune some happy guide 280
 Me sendin might, that would me bring
 Where I was borne, to my wonning,
 For way ne fote ne knew I none,
 Ne whithirward I n'ist to gone,
 For all was se about the yle; 285
 No wondir though me list not smile,
 Seing the case uncouth and straunge;
 And so in like a perilous chaunge,
 Imagi'ning thus walking alone
 I saw the ladies everichone, 290

So that I might somwhat offer,
 Sone aftir that I drew me nere,
 And tho I was ware of the quene,
 And how the ladies on ther knene
 With joyous words gladly advised 295
 Her welcomed so that it suffised
 Though she the princes whole had be
 Of all environed is with se;
 And thus avising with chere sad
 All sodainly I was right glad, 300
 That gretir joy, as mote I thrive,
 I trow had nevir man on live
 Than I tho, ne an hert more light,
 When of my lady I had sight,
 Which with the quene ycome was there, 305
 And in one clothing both they were;
 A knight also there well befene
 I saw that come was with the quene,
 Of whom the ladies of that yle
 Had hugè wondir a long while, 310
 Till at the last right sobirly
 The quene her self full cunningly,
 With softè wordis in gode wise,
 Said to the ladies yong and nise,
 My sistirs, how it hath befall 315
 I trow ye know it one and all
 That of long time here have I bene
 Within this yle biding as quene,

Living at ese, that nevir wight
 More parfit joy havin ne might, 320
 And to you ben of govirnance
 Such as you found in whole plesance,
 In evèry thing as ye know
 Astir our custome and our low,
 Which how they first yfoundin were 325
 I trow ye wote all the manere;
 And who the quene is of this yle,
 As I have ben this longè while,
 Ech sevin yeres mote of usage
 Visit the heavenly armitage 330
 Which on a rock so high yflonds,
 In strangè se out from all londs,
 That to makin the pilgrimage
 Is called a long peri'lous viage,
 For if the wind be not gode frend 335
 The journey duris to the end
 Of him whiche that it undirtakes;
 Of twenty thousand one not scapes;
 Upon which rock growith a tre
 That certaine yeres beres applis thre, 340
 Which thre applis who so may have
 Ben from all displeaunce ysave
 That in the sevin yere may fall,
 This wote ye well bothe one and all,
 For the first apple and the hext 345
 Which ygrowth unto you next

Yhath thre vertues notable,
 And kepith youth aie durable,
 Beauty and loke evir in one,
 And is the best in everichone. 350

The second apple red and grene,
 Onely with lokis of your yene
 You nourishis in grete plesaunce
 Bettir than partridge or sесаunce,
 And fedis every liv'is wight 355
 Plesantly onely with the sight.

And the third apple of the thre,
 Which growith lowist on the tre,
 Who it beris ne may not faile
 That to his plesaunce may availe, 360
 So your plesure and beauty rich
 Your during youth evir yliche,
 Your truth, your cunning, and your wele,
 Hath aye flourid, and your gode hele,
 Without sicknes or displesaunce, 365

Or thing that to you was noyсаunce,
 So that you have as goddesles
 Livid above all princestes:
 Now is befall, as ye may se,
 To gathir these said applis thre, 370
 I have not failed againe the day
 Thithirwardis to take the way,
 Wening to spede as I had oft;
 But when I come I find aloft

My sistir, which that here ystande,
 Having those applis in her hands,
 Avising them, and nothing said,
 But lokid as she were well paid;
 And as I stode her to behold,
 Thinking how my joyis were cold
 Sith I those applis have ne might,
 Evin with that so came this knight,
 And in his armes of me aware
 Me toke, and to his ship me bare,
 And said, though him I ner had sene
 Yet had I long his lady ben,
 Wherefore I should with him ywend,
 And he would to his liv'is end
 My servant be, and gan to sing
 As one that had wonne a rich thing:
 Tho were my spirits fro me gone
 So sodainly evèrichone
 That in me apperid but deth,
 For I felt neithir life ne breth,
 Ne gode ne harmè none I knewe;
 The sodaine paine me was so new,
 That had not the hasty grace be
 Of this lady, that fro the tre
 Of her gentilnesse so hyid
 Me to comfort I had dyid,
 And of her thre applis she one
 Into mine hand there put anone,

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Which brought againe my mind and breth,
 And me recovered from the deth;
 Wherefore to her so am I hold 405
 That for her all things do I wold,
 For she was lech of all my smert,
 And from grete paine so quite mine hert,
 And, as God wote, right as ye here
 Me to comfort with frendly chere 410
 She did her prowesse and her might;
 And truly eke so did this knight
 In that he couth, and oftin said
 That of my wo he was ill paid,
 And cursed the ship that them there brought, 415
 The mast, the mastir that it wrought:
 And as ech thing mote have an end,
 My sistir here, your brothir frend,
 Con with her words so womanly
 This knight entrete and conningly, 420
 For mine honour and his also,
 And said that with her we should go
 Both in her ship, where she was brought,
 Which was so wondirfully wrought,
 So clene, so rich, and so araid, 425
 That we were both content and paid;
 And me to comfort and to plesse,
 And mine hert for to put at ese,
 She toke grete paine in litil while,
 And thus hath brought us to this yle, 430

As ye may se; wherfore echone
I pray you thanke her one and one
As hertly as ye can devise
Or imagine in any wise.
At once there tho men mightin seen 435
A world of ladies fall on kneen
'Fore my lady, that there about
Was left none stāding in the rout,
But altogither they went at ones
To knele; they spared not for the stones, 440
Ne for estate, ne for ther blode;
Well shewid there they couth much gode:
To my lady they made such fest,
And with such wordis, that the lest
So frendly and so faithfully 445
Ysaïd was and so cunningly,
That wondir was, seing ther youth,
To here the language that they couth,
And wholly how they governed were
In thanking of my lady there, 450
And saïd by will and maundement
They were at her commaundement,
Which was to me as grete a joy
As winning of the toune of Troy
Was to the hardy Grekis strong 455
When they it wan with siegè long,
To se my lady' in such a place,
And so recevid as she was.

And when they talkid had a while
 Of this and that, and of the yle, 460
 My lady and the ladies there,
 Altogithir as they ywere,
 The quene her self began to play,
 And to the agid lady fay,
 Now semith you not gode it were, 465
 Sith we be altogithir here,
 To ordaine and devise the best
 To set this knight and me at rest,
 For *Woman is a feble wight*
 To *vere a warre against a knight;* 470
 And sith he here is in this place,
 At my left in dangir or grace,
 It were to me grete villany
 To do him any tiranny;
 But faine I would, now will ye here, 475
 In his owne country that he were,
 And I in pece and he at ese;
 This were a way us both to plesse;
 If it might be I you besече
 With him hereof you fall in speche. 480
 This lady tho began to smile,
 Avising her a litil while,
 And with glad chere she said anone,
 Madam, I will unto him gone,
 And with him speke, and oftin fele 485
 What he desiris every dele:

And fobirly this lady tho
 Her felfe, and othir ladies two
 She toke with her, and with fad chere
 Said to the knight on this manere ; 490
 Sir, the grete princes of this yle,
 Whom for your plesance many a mile
 Ye fought have, as I undirstond,
 Till at the last ye have her fond,
 Me sent hath here, and ladies twaine, 495
 To herin all thing that ye faine ;
 And for what cause ye have her fought
 Faine would she wote, and whole your thought,
 And why you do her all this wo,
 And for what cause you be her fo, 500
 And why of every wight unware
 By force ye to your ship her bare,
 That she so nigh ywas agone
 That mind ne spech ne had she none,
 But as a painfull creāture 505
 Dying abode, her advinture,
 That her to fe indure that paine
 Here we all fay unto you plaine
 Right on your felfe ye did amiffe,
 Seing how she a princes is. 510
 This knight, the which ycowth his gode,
 Right of his truth mevid his blode,
 That pale he woxe as any led,
 And lok't as tho he wold be ded ;

Blode was there none in nothir cheke, 515
 Wordlesse he was, and semid sicke;
 And so it provid well he was,
 For without moving any paas,
 All sodainly as thing dying,
 He fell at onis downe fowning; 520
 That for his wo this lady fraid
 Unto the quene her hyed, and said,
 Cometh on anon, as have you blisse,
 But ye be wise; thing is amisse;
 This knight is ded or will be sone, 525
 Lo! where he lyith in a fwone
 Withoutin word or answiring.
 To that I have said any thing;
 Wherefore I doubt moche that the blame
 Might be hindiring to your name, 530
 Which flourid hath so many yere,
 So longè that for nothing here
 I would in no wise that he dyed,
 Wherefore it gode were that ye hyed,
 His life to savin at the left; 535
 And astir that his wo be cest
 Commaundith him to voide or dwell,
 For in no wise dare I more mell
 Of thing wherein such perill is
 As like is now to fall of this. 540
 This quene right tho, full of grete fere,
 With all the ladies present there,

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515 Unto the knight came where he lay,
 And made a lady to him say,
 Lo! here the queene; awake, for shame!
 545 What will you doe? is this gode game?
 Why lye you here? what is your mind?
 520 Now is well sene your wit is blind,
 To se so many ladies here
 And ye to make none othir chere;
 550 But as ye set them all at nought
 Arise for his love that you bought.
 525 But what she said a word not one
 He spake, ne answere gave her none.
 The queene of very pittie tho,
 555 Her worship and his life also
 To savin, there she did her paine,
 530 And quoke for fere, and gan to saine,
 For woe, alas! what shall I doe!
 What shall I say this man unto?
 560 If he die here lost is my name:
 How shal I play this perillous game?
 535 If any thing be here amisse
 It shall be said it rigour is,
 Whereby my name impayrin might;
 565 And like to die eke is this knight:
 And with that word her hand she laid
 540 Upon his brest, and to him said,
 Awake, my knight! lo! it am I
 That to you speke: now tell me why
 570

Ye fare thus, and this paine endure,
 Seing you be in country sure,
 Among such frends that would you hele,
 Your hert'is ese eke and your wele?
 And if I wist what you might ese, 575
 Or know the thing that you might plese,
 I you ensure it should not faile
 That to your hele you might auaile;
 Wherefore with all my hert I pray
 Ye rise, and let us talke and play: 580
 And se how many ladies here
 Be comin for to make gode chere!
 All was for nought, for still as ston
 He lay, and word ne spoke he none;
 Long while was or he might braid; 585
 And of all that the quene had said
 He wist no word; but at the last
 O mercy! twise he cryid fast,
 That pittie was his voice to here,
 Or to behold his painefull chere, 590
 Which was not feined was well to sein
 Both by his visage and his eyn,
 Which on the quene at once he cast,
 And sighid as he would to braft,
 And astir that eke he shrighit so 595
 That wondir was to se his wo,
 For sithin that payne was first named
 Was ner more wofull payne attained,

For with voyce ded he gan to plaine,
 And to himselfe these wordis saine; 600
 I, wofull wight full of malure,
 Am worse than ded, and yet I dure,
 And maugre any paine or deth
 Against my will I fele my breth :
 Why n'am I ded, sith I ne serve, 605
 And sith my lady will me slerve ?
 Where art thou, Deth ? art thou agast ?
 Well shall we mete yet at the last :
 Though thou the hide it is for nought,
 For where thou dwelst thou shalt be sought : 610
 Maugre thy subtil double face
 Here will I die right in this place.
 To thy dishonour and myne ese
 Thy mannir is no wight to plesse :
 What nedis the, sith I the seche, 615
 So the to hide, my payne to eche ?
 And well wost thou I will not live
 Who would me all this world here give,
 For I have with my cowardise
 Lost joy, and hele, and my servise, 620
 And made my soveraigne lady so
 That while she lives I trow my fo
 She will be evir to her end ;
 Thus have I neithir joy ne frend.
 Wote I not whethir hast or sloth 625
 Hath causid this now by my troth,

For at the hermitage full hie,
 When I her saw first with myne eye,
 I hyid till I was aloft,
 And made my pace small and soft, 630
 Till in mine armes I had her fast,
 And to my ship bare at the last,
 Whereof she was displeid so
 That endles there semid her wo,
 And I thereof had so grete fere 635
 That me repent that I come there,
 Which hast I trow gan her displese,
 And is the cause of my disese.
 And with that word he gan to cry,
 Now Deth, Deth, come, twyis or thry, 640
 And motrid I n'ot what of slouth :
 And even with that the quene of routh
 Him in her armis toke, and sayd,
 Now, mine owne knight ! be' not ill apayd
 That I a lady to you sent 645
 To have knowledge of your entent,
 For in gode faith I men't but well,
 And would ye wist it every dele,
 Nor will not do to you ywis;
 And with that word she gan him kisse, 650
 And prayed him rise, and said she would
 His welfare by her truth, and told
 Him how she was for his disese
 Right sory, and faine would him plese,

His lyfe to save. These wordis tho
 She said to him, and many mo,
 In comforting, for from the paine
 She would he were delivered faine,
 The knight tho up ycast his een,
 And when he saw it was the quene
 That to him had these wordis said,
 Right in his wo he gan to braid,
 And him up dressis for to knele,
 The quene avising wondir wele;
 But as he rose he ovirthrew,
 Wherefore the quene yet eft anew
 Him in her armis anone toke,
 And pitiously gan on him loke;
 But for all that nothyng she sayd,
 Ne spake not like she were well payd,
 Ne no chere made nor sad ne light,
 But all in one to every wight
 There was sene conning with estate
 In her without noyse or debate,
 For save onely a loke piteous
 Of womenhed undispiteous,
 That she showid in countenance,
 Far semed her hert from obeisance,
 And not for that she did her reine
 Him to recovir from the peine,
 And his hert for to put at large,
 For her entent was to his barge

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Him for to bryng agaynst the eve,
 With certaine ladies, and take leve,
 And pray him of his gentilnesse 685
 To suffir her thenceforth in pece,
 As ethir princis had before,
 And from thenceforth for evirmore
 She would him worship in all wise
 That gentilnesse ymight devise, 690
 And payne her wholly to fulfill
 In honour his plesure and will.
 And during thus this knightis wo,
 Present the quene and othir mo,
 My lady' and many' an othir wight, 695
 Ten thousand shippis at a sight
 I saw come oer the wawy flode
 With sayle and ore, that as I stode
 Them to behold I gan marvaile
 From whom might come so many' a faile, 700
 For sith the tyme that I was bore
 Such a navie there ne're before
 Had I not sene, ne so arayed,
 That for the sight my hert yplayed
 Aye to and fro within my brest 705
 For joy; long was or it would rest;
 For there was saylis full of floures,
 Aftir castils with hugè toures,
 Yfeming full of armis bright,
 That wondir lusty was the sight, 710

With large toppis and mastis long,
 Richly depeint, and reare among
 85 At certaine timis gan repayre
 Smalè birdis doune from the aire,
 And on the shippis bounds about 715
 Yfate and song with voyce full out
 Ballades and layes right joyously,
 690 As they cowth in ther harmony,
 That you to write that I there se
 Mine excuse is it may not be; 720
 For why? the mattir were to long
 To name the birds and write ther song;
 695 Whereof anon the tydings there
 Unto the quene sone brought ywere,
 With many' alas and many' a doubt, 725
 Shewing the shippis there without:
 Tho gan the agid lady wepe,
 700 And said, Alas! our joy on slepe
 Sone shal be brought, ye, long or night,
 For we discried ben by this knight, 730
 For certes it may none othir be
 But he is of yond companie,
 705 And they be come him here to seche;
 And with that word her faylid speche.
 Without reme'dy we be destroid, 735
 Full oft said all, and gan conclude
 Wholy at onis at the last
 710 That best was shrit ther yatis fast,

And arme them all in gode langage,
 As they had done of old usage, 740
 And of fayre wordis make ther shot;
 This was ther counsaile and the knot,
 And othir purpose toke they none,
 But armed thus forth they all gone
 Toward the wallis of the yle; 745
 But or they comin there long while
 They mettin the grete lord of bove
 That callid is the god of Love,
 That them avisid with such chere,
 Right as he with them angry were : 750
 Avayled them not ther wals of glasse;
 This mighty lord let not to passe
 The shuttyng of ther yatis fast;
 All they had ordained was but wast;
 For when his ships had foundin land 755
 This lord anon, with bow in hand,
 Into this yle with hugè prefe
 Yhyid fast, and would not cese
 Till he came there the knight ylay:
 Of quene ne lady by the way 760
 Toke he no hede, but forth he past,
 And yet all followed at the last.
 And when he came where lay the knight
 Well shewid he he had grete might,
 And forth the quene callid anone 765
 And all the ladies everichone,

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And to them said, Is not this routh,
 To se my servaunt for his trowth
 Thus lene, thus sicke, and in this payne,
 And wot not unto whom to playne, 770
 Save onely one withoutin mo,
 Which might him hele, and is his fo?
 And with that word his hevy brow
 He shewed the quene, and lokid row.
 This mighty lord forth tho anone 775
 With o loke her faultis echone
 He can her shew in litil spech,
 Commaunding her to be his lech.
 Withoutin more, shortly to say,
 He thought the quene sone should obay, 780
 And in his hond he shoke his bow,
 And said right sone he would be know;
 And for she had so long refused 755
 His service, and his lawes not used,
 He let her wit that he was wroth, 785
 And bent his bow, and forth he goth
 A pace or two, and evin there
 A largè draught up to his ere
 He drew, and with an arrow ground
 Bothe sharpe and new the quene a wound 790
 He gave that perfed unto the hert,
 Which astirward full fore gan smert,
 And was not whole of many yere;
 And even with that Be of gode chere,

My knight, quod he; I will the hele,	795
And the restore to parfite wele,	
And for ech payne thou hast endured	
To have two joies thou art enured;	
And forth he passid by the rout,	
With sobir chere walking about,	800
And what he said I thought to here;	
Well wist he which his servaunts were:	
And as he passed anon he fond	
My lady', and her toke by the hond,	
And made her chere as a goddes,	805
And of Beaute called her Princes,	
Of Bounty eke gave her the name,	
And sayd there was nothyng to blame	
In her, but she was vertuous,	
Saving she would no pity use,	810
Which was the cause that he her sought	
To put that far out of her thought;	
And sithin she had whole richesse	
Of womanhed and frendlinesse,	
He said it was nothing fitting	815
To void Pity his owne leggyng;	
And gan her prech and with her play,	
And of her beauty told her aie,	
And said she was a creature	
Of whom the name should endure,	820
And in bokis full of plesauce	
Be put for er in remembraunce;	

- 795 And as me thoughtin more frendly,
 Unto my lady and godelily
 He spake than any that was there; 825
 And for the' applis I trow it were
 That she had in possession,
 800 Wherefore long in procession
 Many a pace arme undir other
 He welke, and so' did with none other: 830
 But what he would commaund or say
 Forthwith nedis all must obay,
 805 And what he desired at the lest
 Of my lady was by request:
 And when they long together had bene 835
 He brought my lady to the quene,
 And to her said, So God you spede
 810 Shew grace, and consent, that is nede.
 My lady tho full conningly,
 Right well avised and womanly, 840
 Downe gan to knele upon the floures
 Which Aprill nourished had with shoures,
 815 And to this mighty lord gan say,
 That plesith you I woll obay,
 And me restraine from othir thought; 845
 As ye woll all thyng shall be wrought:
 And with that word kneling she quoke.
 820 That mighty lord in armes her toke,
 And said, You have a servaunt, one
 That truir living is there none, 850

Wherefore gode were, feing his trouth,
That on his painis ye had routh,
And purpose you to here his spech,
Fully avifid him to lech,
For of one thyng ye may be sure, 855
He will be yours while he may dure.
And with that word right on his game
Me thought he lough, and told my name,
Which was to me marvaile and fere,
That what to do I ne wist there, 860
Ne whethir was me bet or none
There to abide or thus to gone,
For well wend I my lady wold
Imagin or deme I had told
My counsaile whole, or made complaint 865
Unto that lord, that mighty faint,
So verily ech thing unfought
He said as he had knowne my thought,
And told my trouth and mine unese
Bet than I couth have for mine ese, 870
Though I had studied all a weke:
Well wist that lord that I was seke,
And would be lechid wendir faine;
No man me blame, mine was the paine.
And when this lord had all ysaid, 875
And long while with my lady plaid,
She gan to smile with spirit glade;
This was the answer that she made,

Which put me there in double peine,

That what to do ne what to seine

Wist I not, ne what was the best;

Ferre was my hert then fro his rest,

For as I thought that smiling signe

Was token that the hert encline

Would to requestis resonable,

Because *Smiling is favorable*

To every thing that shal thrive,

So thoughtin I tho anon blive

That *Worldlesse* answer in no toun

Was tane for obligacioun,

Ne callid surety in no wise

Amongst them that callid ben wise:

Thus was I in a joyous dout,

Sure and unfurist of that rout;

Right as mine hert ythought it were

So more or lesse wexin my fere,

That if one thought ymade it wele

Anothir shent it everydele,

Till at the last I couth no more,

But purposed as I did before

To serve truly my lyv'is space,

Awaiting er the yere of grace,

Which may yfall yet or I serve,

If that it plese her that I serve,

And servid have, and well do ever,

For thyng is none that me is lever

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Than is her service, whose presence
 Mine heven is whole, and her absence
 An hell all full of divers paines,
 Whych to the deth full oft me straines. 910
 Thus in my thoughtis as I stode,
 That unneth felt I harme ne gode,
 I saw the quene a litil paas
 Come where this mighty lord ywas,
 And knelid downe in presence there 915
 Of all the ladies that there were,
 With fobir countinaunce avised,
 In few wordis that well suffised,
 And to this lord anon present
 A bill, wherein whole her entent 920
 Was writtin, and how she besought,
 As he knew every will and thought,
 That of his godhed and his grace
 He would forgyve all old trespase,
 And undisplefed be of time past, 925
 For she would evir be stedfast,
 And in his service to the deth
 Use every thought while she had breth,
 And sight and wept, and said no more,
 Within was writtin all the fore : 930
 At whychè bill the lord gan smyle,
 And said he would within that yle
 Be lord and syre both est and west,
 And cal'd it there his new conquest,

And in grete counsell toke the quene; 935

Long were the talis them betwene :

And ovir her bill he red thrise,

And wondir gladly gan devise

Her fetures faire and her visage,

And bad gode thrift on that image, 940

And saied he trowid her compleint

Should astir cause her be corseint ;

And in his sleve he put the bill,

Was there none that yknew his will,

And forth he walke apace about, 945

Beholding all the lusty rout,

Halfe in a thought with smiling chere,

Till at the last, as ye shall here,

He turned unto the quene ageine,

And saied, To morne here in this pleine 950

I woll that ye be and all yours,

That purposid ben to were flours,

Or of my lusty colour use,

It may not be to you excuse,

Ne to none of yours in no wise, 955

That able be to my servise ;

For as I saied have here before

I will be lord for evirmore

Of you, and of this yle, and all,

And of all yours that havin shall 960

Joy, pece, or ese, or in plefaunce

Your livis use without noyfaunce ;

Here will I in state be ysene,
 And turned his visage to the quene,
 And you give knowledge of my will, 965
 And a full answer of your bill.
 Was there no nay, ne wordis none,
 But very' obeisaunt semed echone;
 The quene and othir that were there
 Well semid it they had grete fere, 970
 And there toke lodging every knight,
 Was none departid of that night,
 And some to rede old romances
 Them occupied for ther plesances,
 Some to make verëlaies and laies, 975
 And some to othir diverse plaies,
 And I to me a romance toke,
 And as I reding was the boke
 Methought the spherè had so run
 That it was rising of the sun, 980
 And such a pres into the plaine
 Assemble gone, that with grete paine
 One might for othir go ne stand,
 Ne none take othir by the hand,
 Withoutin they disflourbid were, 985
 So huge and gret the pres was there.
 And aftir that within two houres
 This mighty lord clad all in floures
 Of divers colours many' a paire
 In his estate up in the aire 990

Well nigh two fathom, as his hight,
 He set him there in all ther sight,
 965 And for the quene and for the knight,
 And for my lady' and every wight,
 In hast he sent, so that ner one
 995 Was there absent, but come echone:
 And when they thus assemblid were,
 As ye have herd me say you here,
 970 Without more tarrying on hight,
 There to be sene of every wight,
 1000 Up stode among the pres above
 A counsaylir, servaunt of Love,
 975 Which semid well of gret estate,
 And shewid there how no debate
 Othir then godely might be used
 1005 In gentilnesse and be excused,
 Wherefore he said his lord'is will
 980 Was every wight there should be still
 And in pees, and of one accord,
 And thus commaundid at a word,
 1010 And can his tongue to swiche language
 To turne, that yet in all mine age
 985 Herd I nevir so conningly
 Man speke, ne halfe so faithfully,
 For every thing he said there
 1015 Semid as it infelid were,
 Or approvid for very trew:
 990 Swiche was his cunning language newe,

And well according to his chere,
 That where I be me thinke I here
 Him yet alway, when I mine one
 In any place may be alone :
 First con he of the lusty yle,
 All the astate in lityl whyle
 Reherse, and wholly every thing
 That causid there his lord's comming,
 And every wele and every wo,
 And for what cause eche thing was fo
 Well shewed he there in esie spech,
 And how the sicke had nede of lech;
 And that whiche whole was and in grace
 He told plainly why ech thing was,
 And at the last he con conclude,
 Voidid evèry language rude,
 And said, That prince, that mighty lord,
 Or his departing would accord
 All the parties were there present,
 And was the fine of his entent,
 Witnesse his presence in your sight,
 Which sits among you in his might;
 And knelid downe withoutin more,
 And not o word yspake he more.

Tho gan this mighty lord him dresse,
 With chere avised, to do largeffe,
 And said unto this knight and me,
 Ye shall to joy restorid be,

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And for ye have ben true ye twaine
 I graunt you here for every paine
 A thousand joies every weke,
 And loke ye be no lengir seke, 1050
 And both your ladies, lo'hem here!
 Take ech his own; beth of gode chere,
 Your happie day is new begun
 Sith it was rising of the sun,
 And to all othir in this place 1055
 I graunt wholly to stand in grace
 That servith truely without flouth,
 And to avauncid be by trouth.
 Tho gan this knight and I downe knele,
 Wening to doin wondir wele, 1060
 Seing, O lord! your grete mercy
 Us hath enriched so opiny
 That we deserve may nevyr more
 The lesse part, but evirmore
 With soule and body truely serve 1065
 You and yours till that we ysterve:
 And to ther ladies there they fode
 This knight, that *south so mikil gode*,
 Ywent in hast, and I also;
 Joyous and glad werin we tho, 1070
 And al so rich in every thought
 As he that all hath and ought nought,
 And them befought in humble wise
 Us to accept to ther service,

And shew us of ther frendly cheres, 1075
 Which in ther tresure many yeres
 They keptin had, us to grete paine,
 And told how ther servauntis twaine
 We were, would be, and so had ever,
 And to the deth chaunge would we never, 1080
 Ne doe offence, ne thinke like ill,
 But fill ther ordinance and will;
 And made our othis freshe and new,
 Our old service for to renew,
 And wholly ther's for evirmore 1085
 We there become; what might we more?
 And well awaiting that in slouth
 We made no fault ne in our trowth,
 Ne thought not do, I you ensure,
 With our will, whilis we may dure. 1090
 This feson past, againe an eve
 This lord of the quene toke his leve,
 And said he would hastely returne,
 And at gode leifure there sojourne,
 Both for his honour and his ese, 1095
 Commaunding fast the knight to plesse,
 And gave his statutes in papirs,
 And orderit divers officirs,
 And forth to ship the same night
 He went, and sone was out of sight. 1100
 And on the morow when the aire
 Attemprid was and wondir faire,

Erly at rising of the sun,
 After the night away was run,
 Yplaying us on the rivage, 1105
 My lady spake of her voyage,
 And said she madin small journies,
 And held her in straunge counteries,
 And forthwith to the quene went,
 And shewed her wholly her entent, 1110
 And toke her leve with chere weping,
 That pitty was to se that parting;
 For to the quene it was a paine,
 As to a martyr new yslaine,
 That for her woe, and she so tender, 1115
 Yet I wepe oft when I remember: —
 She offerid there to resigne
 To my lady eight times or nine
 Th' astate, the yle, shortly to tell,
 If it might plese her there to dwell, 1120
 And said, for evir her linage
 Should to my lady doe homage,
 And hers be whole withoutin more,
 Ye, and all thers for evirmore.
 Nay, God forbid! my lady est, 1125
 With many conning word and soft,
 Said, that evir such a thing should bene
 That I consent should that a quene
 Of your estate, and so well named,
 In any wise should be attamed, 1130

But would be faine with all my hert,
 What so befell or how me smert,
 To doin thing that you might plesse
 In any wise or be your ese,
 And kissid there and bad gode night, 1135
 For which leve wept many a wight.
 There might men here my lady praised,
 And such a name of her araised,
 What of cunning and frendlineffe,
 What of beauty with gentilnesse, 1140
 And what of glad and frendly cheres
 That she usid in all her yeres,
 That wondir was here every wight
 To say well how they did ther might,
 And with a pres upon the morow 1145
 To ship her brought, and what a sorow
 They made when she should undir faile,
 That and ye wist ye would mervaile.
 Forth goeth the ship, out goeth the sond,
 And I as a wode man unbond, 1150
 For doubt to be left behind there,
 Into the se withoutin fere
 Anon I ran, till with a waw
 All sodenly I was oerthraw,
 And with the watir to and fro 1155
 Backward and forward travailed so
 That mind and breth nigh was ygone,
 For gode ne harme ne knew I none,

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Til at the last with hokis tweine
 Men of the ship with mikil peine 1160
 To save my life did such travaile
 That and ye wist ye would mervaile,
 And in the ship me drewe on hie,
 And saidin all that I would die,
 And laid me long downe by the mast, 1165
 And of ther clothis on me cast;
 And there I made my testament,
 And wist my selfe not what I ment,
 But when I said had what I would,
 And to the mast my wo all told, 1170
 And tane my leve of every wight,
 And closed mine eyen and lost my sight,
 Avised to die without more spech,
 Or any remedy to sech
 Or grace new, as was grete nede, 1175
 My lady of my paine toke hede,
 And her bethought how that for trouth
 To se me die it were grete routh,
 And to me came in sobir wise,
 And softly said, I pray you rise; 1180
 Come on with me; let be this fare;
 All shall be wel; have ye no care;
 I will obey ye and fulfill
 Wholly in al that lordis will
 That you and me not long ago 1185
 Astir his list commaundid so,

That there againe no resistance
 May be withoutin gret offence,
 And therefore now loke what I say,
 I am and will be frendly aye; 1190
 Rise up, behold this avauntage,
 I grauntin you in heritage
 All peceably withoutin strive
 During the dayis of your live;
 And of her applis in my sleve 1195
 One she yput, and toke her leve
 In wordis few, and said, Gode hele
 He that all made you send, and wele!
 Wherewith my painis all at ones
 Tokin such leve, that all my bones, 1200
 For the new durenfè plesaunce,
 So as they couth desired to daunce,
 And I as whole as any wight
 Up rose with joyous hert and light,
 Whole and unsicke, right wele at ese, 1205
 And all forget had my disese,
 And to my lady where she plaid
 I went anone, and to her said;
 He that all joies persons to plesse
 First ordainid with parfite ese, 1210
 And every plesure can depart,
 Send you, Madanie, as large a part,
 And of his godis such plenty,
 As he has done you of beauty,

With hele, and all that may be thought, 1215

He fend you all as he all wrought.

Madame, (quod I) your servaunt trew

Have I ben long, and yet will new,

Withoutin chaunge or repentaunce

In any wise or variaunce, 1220

And so will do, as thrive I ever,

For thing is none that me is lever

Than you to plesse how er I fare,

Mine hert's lady and my welfare,

My life, mine hele, my lech also 1225

Of every thing that doth me wo,

My helpe at nede, and my surete

Of every joy that longs to me,

My succours whole in allè wise

That may be thought or man devise, 1230

Your grace, Madame, such have I found,

Now in my nede, that I am bound

To you for er, so Christ me save,

For hele and live of you I have,

Wherefore is resoun I you serve 1235

With due obeisaunce till I sterve,

And ded and quicke be evir yours,

Late, erly, and at allè hours.

Tho came my lady small alite,

And in plaine English con confite, 1240

In wordis few whole her entent

She shewed me there, and how she ment

To me ward in evèry wise,
Wholly she came at ther devise, .
Without proceffe or long travell, 1245
Charging me to kepin counsell,
As I would to her grace attaine,
Of which commaundement I was faine;
Wherefore I passe oer at this time,
For counsell cords not well in rime, 1250
And eke the oth that I have swore
To breke me were bettir unbore;
Why? for untrue for evirmore
I should be hold, that nevirmore
Of me in place should be report 1255
Thing that availe might, or comfort
To mewardis in any wise,
And eche wight wouldin me dispise
In that they couth, and me repreve,
Which were a thing fore for to greve, 1260
Wherefore hereof more mencion
Make I not now ne long sermon,
But shortly thus I me excuse,
To rime a counsell I refuse.
Sailing thus two dayis or thre 1265
My lady towards her countre,
Ovir the wavis high and grene,
Which werin large and depe betwene,
Upon a time me called and said,
That of my hele she was well paid, 1270

And of the quene and of the yle
 She talkid with me a long while,
 And of all that she there had sene,
 And of th' estate and of the quene,
 And of the ladies name by name, 1275
 Two houres or mo this was her game,
 Till at the last the wind can rise,
 And blew so fast and in such wise
 The ship, that every wight can say
 Madame, er eve be of this day, 1280
 And God tofore, ye shall be there
 As ye would fainist that ye were,
 And doubtith not within sixe hours
 Ye shall be there as all is yours :
 At which wordis she gan to smile, 1285
 And said that was no longè while
 That they her fet; and up she rose,
 And all about the ship she gofe,
 And made gode chere to every wight,
 Till of the land she had a sight, 1290
 Of whichè sight glad, God it wot,
 She was abashid and abote,
 And forth goeth, shortly you to tell,
 Where she accustomed was to dwell,
 And recevid was, as gode right, 1295
 With joyous chere and hert'is light,
 And as a glad new avinture
 Plefaunt to evèry cature;

With which landing tho I awoke,
And found my chambir full of smoke, 1300
My chekis eke unto the eres,
And all my body, wet with teres,
And all so feble' and in such wise
I was, that unneth might I rise,
So far travailid and so faint, 1305
That neithir knew I kirke ne faint,
Ne what was what ne who was who,
Ne avised what way I would go;
But by an adventurous grace
I rise and walkt, fought pace and pace, 1310
Till I a winding flaire yfound,
And held the vice aye in my hond,
And upward softly so can crepe
Till I came where I thought to slepe
More at mine ese, and out of prece, 1315
At my gode leifure and in pece,
Till fomwhat I recomfort were
Of the travill and the grete fere
That I endurid had before,
This was my thought withoutin more; 1320
And as a wight witleffe and faint,
Without more, in a chambir paint
Full of stories old and divers,
More than I can as now reherse,
Unto a bed full sobirly, 1325
So as I mightin, full southly,

Pace aſtir other, and nothing ſaid,
Till at the laſt downe I me laid,
And as my mind would give me leve
All that I dremid had that eve
Before that all I can reherſe,
Right as a child at ſchole his verſe
Doth aſtir that he thinketh to thrive,
Right ſo did I for all my live,
I thought to have in remembraunce
Both the paine and eke the pleaſaunce,
The Dreame whole as it me befell,
Which was as ye herin me tell:
Thus in my thoughtis as I lay
That happy or unhappy day,
Ne wot I not, ſo have I blame,
Of the two which ſhulde be the name,
Befell me ſo that there a thought
By proceſſe new on ſlepe me brought,
And me governed ſo in a while
That ones againe within the yle
Me thought I was, where of the knight
And of the ladies I had fight,
And were aſſemblid on a grene,
Bothe knight and lady with the quene,
At which aſſembly there was ſaid
How that they all content and paid
Werin wholly as in that thing
That the knight there ſhould be the king,

And they would all for sure witnesse 1359
Yweddid be both more and lesse,
In remembraunce, withoutin more,
Thus they consent for evirmore,
And was concludid that the knight
Departin should the samè night, 1360
And forthwith there toke his voiage
To journey for his marriage,
And returnin with such an host
That weddid might be lest and most :
This was concluded, written and seled, 1365
That it ne might not be repeled
In no wise, but continue firme,
And all should be within a terme,
Without more excusation,
Both fest and coronation. 1370
This knight, which had thereof the charge,
Anon into a little barge
Ybrought was late against an eve,
Where of all he ytoke his leve,
Which barge was as a man's thought 1375
Aftir his plesure to him brought,
The quene her selfe accustomed aye
In the same barge oft for to play,
It nedith neithir mast ne rothir,
I have not herd of such another, 1380
No maistr for the govirnaunce,
He saylid by thought and plesaunce,

355 Withoutin labour est and west,
 All ywasone calme or tempest,
 And I went with at his request, 1385
 And was the first praied to the fest.
 When he came into his countre,
 360 And passid had the wavy se,
 In an havin bothe depe and large
 He left his rich and noble barge, 1390
 And to the court, shortly to tell,
 He went where he was wont to dwell,
 365 And was recevid, as gode right,
 As heire, and for a worthy knight,
 With all the statis of the lond, 1395
 Which came anon at his first sond,
 With glad spiritis full of trouth,
 370 Loth to do fault, or with a slouth
 Attaint to be in any wise,
 Ther richis was ther old servise, 1400
 Which evir trew had ben yfend
 Sich first inhabit was the lond;
 375 And so recevid thei ther king
 That forgottin ywas no thing
 That ought to be done ne might plese, 1405
 Ne ther soveraine lord do ese;
 And with them so, shortly to say,
 380 As they of custome had done aye,
 For sevin yere past was and more,
 The fater, the old, wife, and hore, 1410

King of the land, ytoke his leve
 Of all his barons on an eve,
 And told them how his dayis past
 Were all, and comin was the last,
 And hart'ily prayed 'hem to remember 1415
 His sonnè, which yong was and tender,
 'That borne ywas ther prince to be,
 If he returne to that countre
 Might by adventure or by grace
 Within any shorte time or space, 1420
 And to be true and frendly aye,
 As they to him had ben alway:
 Thus he them prayd withoutin more,
 And toke his leve for evirmore.
 Knowin was how tendir in age 1425
 This yongè prince a grete viage
 Uncouth and straung, honours to seche,
 Ytoke in hond with lityl speche,
 Which was to sekin a princes
 That he desired more than riches, 1430
 For her grete name that flourid so
 That in that time there was no mo
 Of her estate, ne so well named,
 For borne was none that er her blamed,
 Of which princes somwhat before 1435
 Here have I spoke, and some will more.
 So thus befell as ye shall here;
 Unto ther lord they made such chere

That joy was there to be present
 To se ther troth and how they ment; I440
 So very glad they were ech one
 That them among there was no one
 I415 Whiche that desirid more riches
 Than for ther lord such a princes
 That they might plesse, and that were faire, I445
 For fast desirid they an heire,
 And said grete surety were ywis.
 And as they were speking of this
 I420 The prince himselfin him avised,
 And in plaine English undisguised I450
 Them shewid wholly his journey,
 And of ther counsell can them prey,
 And told how he ensurid was,
 I425 And how his day he might not passe
 Withoutin disffame and grete blame, I455
 And to him for evir a shame;
 And of ther counsell and avise
 There he prayith them once or twise,
 I430 And that they would within ten daies
 Avise and ordaine him such waies, I460
 So that it were no displesaunce,
 Ne to this relme oer grete grievance,
 And that he might have to his fest
 I435 Sixty thousand gestes at the left,
 For his intent within short while I465
 Was to returne unto this yle

That he came fro, and kepe his day;
For nothing would he be away.
To counsaile tho the lords anon
Into a chambir everychone 1470
Togithir went, them to devise
How they might best and in what wise
Purvey for their lord's plesaunce,
And the relm's continuance
Of honor, which in it before 1475
Had continuid evirmore:
So at the last they found the waies,
How that within the next ten daies
All might with paine and diligence
Be done, and cast what the dispence 1480
Might draw, and, in conclusion,
Made for ech thing provision.
When this was done, wholly tofore
The prince the lordis all before
Come, and shewid what they had done, 1485
And how they couth by no reson
Findin that within the ten daies
He might departin by no waies,
But would be sistene at the lest
Or he returne might to his lest; 1490
And shewed him every reson why
It might not be so hastily
As he desirid, ne his day
He might not kepe by no way,

For divers causis wondir grete; 1495

Which when he herd in such an hete

He fell for sorow, and was feke,

1470 Still in his bed wholè that weke,

And nigh the tothir for the shame,

And for the doubt and for the blame 1500

That mightin on him be aret,

And oft upon his brest he bet,

1475 And said, Alas! mine honour for aye

Have I here lost clenely this day;

Ded would I be; alas! my name 1505

Shall aye be more henceforth in shame,

And I dishonoured and reprevèd,

1480 And nevir more shall be beleved:

And made swich sorow, that in trouth

Him to behold it was grete routh; 1510

And so endured the dayes siftenè,

Till that the lords on an even

1485 Him come and told they redy were,

And shewid in few wordis there

How and what wise they had purvey'd 1515

For his estate, and to him said,

That twenty thousand knights of name,

1490 And fourty thousand without blame,

All come of noble ligine,

Togidir in a compane, 1520

Were lodgid on a river's side,

Him and his plesure there t'abide.

The prince tho for joy up arose,
 And where they lodgid were he goes
 Withoutin more that samè night, 1525
 And these his suppir made to dight,
 And with them bode till it was dey,
 And forthwith to take his journey,
 Leving the streight, holding the large,
 Till he came to his noble barge : 1530
 And when this prince, this lustie knight,
 With his peple in armis bright
 Was comin where he thought to pas,
 And knew well none abiding was
 Behind, but all were there present, 1535
 Forthwith anon all his intent
 He told them there, and made his cries
 Thorough his hostè that day twise,
 Commaunding every livis wight
 There being present in his sight 1540
 To be the' morow on the rivage,
 Where he begin would his viage.
 The morow come, the cry was kept,
 But few was there that night that slept,
 But trussed and purveid for the morow, 1545
 For fault of ships was all ther sorrow,
 For save the barge and othir two
 Of shippis there saw I no mo :
 Thus in ther doubtis as they stode,
 Waxing the se, comming the fode, 1550

Was cried To ship goe every wight,
 Then was but hie that hie him might;
 And to the barge me thought echone
 They went, without was left not one,
 Ne horse ne male, trusse ne baggage, 1555
 Salad ne spere, gardbrace ne page,
 But was lodgid, and rome ynough;
 At which shipping me thought I lough,
 And gan to marvaile in my thought
 How evir such a ship was wrought, 1560
 For what peple that can encrese,
 Ne ner so thicke might be the prese,
 But all had romè at ther will,
 There was not one was lodgid ill;
 For as I trowe my selfe the last 1565
 Was one, and lodgid by the mast,
 And where I loked I saw such rome
 As all were lodgid in a towne.
 Forth goth the ship, said was the crede,
 And on ther knees for ther gode spede 1570
 Downe knelid every wight a while,
 And prayid fast that to the yle
 They mightin comin in safety,
 The prince and all the company,
 With worship and withoutin blame, 1575
 Or disclaundir of his gode name,
 Of the promise he should retourne,
 Within the time he did sojourne,

In his londè biding his host,
 'This was ther prayir lest and most : 1580
 To kepe the day it might not ben
 That he' appointid had with the quene
 To returnin withoutin slouth,
 And so assurid had his trouth,
 For which default this prince, this knight, 1585
 During the time slept not a night,
 Such was his wo and his disese,
 For doubt he should the quene displese.
 Forth goith the ship with such spede
 Right as the prince for his grete nede 1590
 Desirin would asfir his thought,
 Till it unto the yle him brought,
 Where all in hast upon the sand
 He and his peple toke the land
 With hertis glad and cherè light, 1595
 Wening to be in heven that night;
 But or they passid had a while,
 Entring in towards that yle,
 All clad in blacke, with chere piteous,
 A lady which ner dispiteous 1600
 Had be in all her life tofore
 With sory chere and hert to tore
 Unto this prince where he gan ride
 Ycome and said, Abide, abide,
 And have no hast, but fail retourne, 1605
 No reson is ye here sojourne,

- 1580 For your untruth hath us discried;
 Wo worth the time we us allied
 With you, that are so sone untrew;
 Alas the day that we you knew! 1610
 Alas the time that ye were bore!
 For all this lond by you is lore;
 1585 Accurfd be he you hidir brought!
 For all our joy is turnd to nought;
 Your acquaintance we may complaine, 1615
 Which is the cause of all our paine.
 Alas! Madame, quod tho this knight,
 1590 And with that from his horse he light,
 With colour pale and chekis lene,
 Alas! what is this for to mene? 1620
 What have ye said? why be ye wroth?
 You to displese I would be loth:
 1595 Knowe ye not full well the promesse
 Which I made have to your princeffe,
 Which to perfourme is mine intent, 1625
 So mote I spede as I have ment,
 And as I am her very trew,
 1600 Withoutin change or thoughtis new,
 And al so fully her servand
 As creature or man livand 1630
 May be to lady or princeffe,
 For she mine heven and whole richeffe
 1605 Is, and the lady of mine hele,
 My worldis joy and all my wele.

What may this be, whence coms this spech? 1635
Telle me, Madame, I you besech,
For sith the first of my living
Was I so ferefull of nothing
As I am now to here you speke,
For doubt I fele mine hert to breke: 1640
Say on, Madame, tell me your will;
The remnaunt is it gode or ill?
Alas (quod she) that ye were bore!
For for your love this land is lore;
'The queene is ded, and that is ruth, 1645
For sorow of your gret untruth:
Of two partes of the lusty rout
Of ladies that were there about,
'That wont werin to talk and play,
Now are thei ded and clene away, 1650
And undir earth tane lodging newe;
Alas that er ye were untrew!
For when the time ye set was past
'The queene toke counsaile sone in hast
What was to doe, and said Grete blacic 1655
Your acquaintaunce cause would and shame,
And the ladies of ther avise
Prayid, for nede was to be wise,
In eschewing talis and songs,
That by them makin would ill tongs, 1660
And sey they were lightly conquest,
And prayid to a pore fest,

1635

And foully had ther worship weved,

When so unwisely they conceived

Ther richè trefour and ther hele,

1665

Ther famous name and ther wele

To put in such an avinture,

1640

Of which the sclaundir evir dure

Was like, without helpe of appele,

Wherefore they nede had of counsele,

1670

For every wight of them would say,

Ther clofid yle an opin way

Was become to every wight,

1645

And well apprevyd by a knight,

Which he, alas! without payfaunce

1675

Had sone achevid th' obeisaunce :

All this was moved at counsell thrife,

And was concludid daily twise,

1650

That bet was die withoutin blame

Than lose the riches of ther name;

1680

Wherefore the deth'is acquaintaunce

They chese, and lest have ther plesaunce,

For doubt to livin as reprevyd,

1655

In that they you so sone beleved,

And made ther othes with one accord,

1685

'That ete ne drinke, ne speke o word,

They should nevyr, but er weping

Bide in a place without parting,

1660

And use ther dayis in penaunce,

Without desire of allegeaunce,

1690

Of which the truth anon con preve ;
 For why ? the quene forthwith her leve
 Toke at them all that were present,
 Of her defaults fully repent,

And dyid there withoutin more,
 Thus are we lost for evirmore ;

1693

What should I more hereof reherse ?

Comin within, come se her herse,
 Where ye shall se the piteous sight
 That er yet was shewin to knight,

1700

For ye shall sein ladies stond
 Ech with a grete rod in her hend,
 Yclad in black with visage white,
 Redy ech othir for to smite ;

If any be that will not wepe,

1705

Or who that makes counte'nance to slepe,

They be so bet, that all so blew

They be as cloth that died is new,

Such is their parfite repentance,

And thus they kepe ther ordinance,

1710

And will do evir to the deth,

While them enduris any breth.

This knight tho in his armis twaine

This lady toke, and gan her faine,

Alas my birth ! wo worth my life !

1715

And even with that he drew a knife,

And thorough gown, doublet, and shert,

He made the blode come from his hert,

And set him doune upon the grene,
 And full repent closid his ene, 1720
 And save that ones he drew his breth
 Without more thus he toke his deth;
 For whichè cause the lusty host,
 Which in a battaile on the cost
 At once for sorrow such a cry 1725
 Gan rere thorow the company,
 That to the heaven herd was the sowne,
 And undir th' erth als fer adowne,
 That wildè bestis for the fere
 So sodainly afrayid were, 1730
 That for the doubt while they might dure
 They ran, as of their lives unsure
 From the wodis unto the plaine,
 And from valleys the high mountaine
 They fought, and ran as bestis blind 1735
 That clene forgottin had ther kind.
 This wo not cesed, to counsaile went
 These lords, and for that lady sent,
 And of avise what was to done
 They her besought she say would sone. 1740
 Weping full fore, all clad in blake,
 This lady softly to them spake,
 And said, My Lordis, by my trouth
 This mischefe it is of your slouth,
 And if ye had that judge would right 1745
 A prince that were a very knight,

1695

1700

1705

1710

1715

Ye that ben of astate echone
Die for his fault shoulde one and one;
And if he hold had the promesse,
And done that longs to gentilnesse, 1750
And fulfilled the princes behest,
This hastie farme had ben a fest,
And now is unrecoverable,
And us a flaundir aye durable,
Wherefore I say, as of counsaile 1755
In me is none that may availe,
But if ye list for remembraunce
Purvey and make such ordinaunce
That the quene whiche that was so meke,
With all her women dede or feke, 1760
Might in your land a chappill have,
With some remembraunce of her grave,
Shewing her end with the pity
In some notable old city,
And nigh unto an highè way, 1765
Where every wight might for her pray,
And for all hers that have ben trew:
And even with that she changid hew,
And twise wishid aftir the deth,
And fight, and thus pallid her breth. 1770
Then said the lordis of the host,
And so concludid lest and most,
That they would in housis of thacke
Ther livis lede, and were but blacke,

- And forfake all ther plesaunces, 1775
 And turne all joy to penaunces,
 And bere the ded prince to the barge,
 And namid them should have the charge;
 And to the herse where lay the quene
 The remnaunt went, and doune on knene, 1780
 Holding ther honds, on high con crie,
 Mercy, mercy ! evèrich thrie,
 And cursed the time that evir flouth
 Should have soche mastirdome of trouth,
 And to the barge a longè mile 1785
 They bare her forth, and in a while
 Allè the ladies one and one
 By companies were brought echone, 1760
 And past the se and toke the land,
 And in new herfis on a sand, 1790
 Put and brought werin all anon
 Unto a city closed with stonè,
 Where it yhad ben usid aye 1765
 The kingis of the land to lay,
 Astir they raigned in honours, 1795
 And writ was which were conquerours,
 In an abbey of nunnis blake,
 Which accustomid were to wake, 1770
 And of usage rise ech a night
 To pray for every livis wight: 1800
 And so befell, as is the guise,
 Ordeint and said was the servise

Of the prince and eke of the queene
 So devoutly as might yben,
 And astir that about the herfes 1805
 Full many orisons and verses
 Withoutin note full softly
 Said were, and that full hertily,
 That all the night till it was day
 The peple in the church con pray 1810
 Unto the holy Trinitie
 Of those soulis to have pitie.

And when the night ypast and ronue
 Was, and the newè day begonne,
 The yong morow with rayis red, 1815
 Which from the sonne oer all con spred,
 Atempirid clere was and faire,
 And made a tyme of wholsome aire,
 Befell a wondir case and strange
 Among the peple, and gan change 1820
 Sone the word and evèry wo
 Unto a joy, and some to two;
 A bird all fedrid blew and grene,
 With bright rayis like gold betwene,
 As small thred ovir every joynt, 1825
 All full of colour strange and coint,
 Uncouth, and wondirfull to fight,
 Upon the quen'is herse con light,
 And song full low and softly
 'Thre songis in her harmony, 1830

Unlettid of evèry wight,
 Till at the last an agid knight,
 Which semid a man in grete thought,
 Like as he set all thing at nought,
 With visage and ein all forwept,
 And pale, as a man long unslept,
 By the herfis as he ystode
 With hasty hondling of his hode
 Unto a prince that by him past
 Ymade the bridde somwhat agast,
 Wherefore she rose and left her song,
 And departid from us among,
 And spred her wingis for to passe
 By the place where he entrid was,
 And in his hast, shortly to tell,
 Him hurt, that backward downe he fell
 From a window richly ypeint
 With lives of many divers seint,
 And bet his wingis and bled fast,
 And of the hurt thus died and past,
 And lay there well an hour and more,
 Till at the last of briddes a score
 Come and assemblid at the place
 Where the window ybrokin was,
 And made swiche wamentacioun
 That pity was to here the soun,
 And the warblis of ther throtis
 And the complaint of ther notis,

1835

1840

1845

1850

1855

Which from joy clene ywas reverfed;
 And of them one the glas sone perfed, 1860
 And in his boke of colours nine
 An herbe he brought flourelesse, all grene,
 All full of small levis and plaine,
 Swart, and long with many a vaine,
 And where his fellow lay this dede 1865
 This herbe he down laid by his hede,
 And dreȝid it full softly,
 And hong his hed and stode thereby,
 Which herb in lesse than half an houre
 Gan oer all knit, and astir floure 1870
 Full out, and wexin ripe the fede,
 And right as one anothir fede
 Would, in his beke he toke the graine,
 And in his fellowes beke certaine
 It put, and thus within the third 1875
 Up stode and prunid him the bird
 Which ded had be in all our sight,
 And both togethir forth ther flight
 Toke, singin from us, and ther leve
 Was none disturbe hem would ne greve. 1880
 And when they partid were and gone
 Th'abbesse the fedis sone echone
 Gathirid had, and in her hand
 The herbe she toke, well avifand
 The lese, the fede, the stalke, the floure, 1885
 And said it had a gode favour,

- 1860 And was no common herb to find,
 And well approved of uncouth kind,
 And than othir more vertuouse;
 Who so have it might for to use 1890
 In his nede flowre, or lese, or graine,
 Of ther hele might ybe certaine;
 1865 And laid it downe upon the herse
 Where lay the quene, and gan reherse
 Echone to' othir that they had sene; 1895
 And taling thus the fede wex grene,
 And on the drie herse gan to spring,
 1870 Which me thought was a wondrous thing,
 And astir that floure and new fede,
 Of which the peple all toke hede, 1900
 And said it was some grete miracle,
 Or medicine fine more than triacle,
 1875 And were well done there to assay
 If it might ese in any way
 The corsis, which with torchè light 1905
 They wakid had there all that night:
 Sone did the lordis there consent,
 1880 And all the peple' thereto content
 With esie words and litil fare,
 And made the quen'is visage bare, 1910
 Which shewid was to all about,
 Wherefore in swone fell whole the rout,
 1885 And were so fery most and lest
 That long of weping they not cest,

- For of ther lord the remembraunce
 Unto them was such displeaunce
 That for to live they called a paine,
 So were they very true and plaine.
 And after this the gode abbesse
 Of the graine gan to chese and dresse
 Thre, with her fingirs clene and smale,
 And in the quen's mouth by tale
 One astir othir esily
 She put 'hem and full conningly,
 Which shewid sonè such vertue
 That previd was the medi'cine true,
 For with a smiling countinaunce
 The quene uprofe, and of usaunce,
 As she was wont to every wight,
 She made gode chere, for whichè sight
The peple kneeling on the stones
Thought they in heven were soule and bones ;
 And to the prince where he ylay
 They went to make the fame assay,
 And when the quene it undirfode,
 And how the medicine was gode,
 She prayid she might have the graines
 To relevin him from the paines
 Which she and he had both endured,
 And to him went and so him cured,
 That streight within a litil space
 Lusty and fresh on live he was.
- 1913
 1920
 1925
 1930
 1935
 1940

And in gode hele, and whole of spech,
 And lough, and said, Gramercy, lech!
 For which the joy throughout the town 1945
 So gret was that the bellis fown
 Afraied the peple a journey
 About the cite every way,
 And come and askid cause and why
 They rongin were so statily? 1950
 And astir that the quene, th' abbesse,
 Made diligence or they would cesse,
 Such that of ladies sone a rout
 Sewing the quene was all about,
 And called by name echone and told, 1955
 Was none forgettin young ne old;
 There mightin men se joyis new
 When the medicine fine and trew
 Thus restorid had every wight,
 So well the quenè as the knight, 1960
 Unto full perfit joy and hele,
 That fleting they were in such wele
 As folke that wouldin in no wise
 Desire more parfit paradise.
 And thus when passed was the sorow, 1965
 With mikil joye sone on the morow
 The king, the quene, and every lord,
 With all the ladies, by' one accord
 Helde a generall asssembly:
 Gret cry was made through the country, 1970

The which aftir as ther intent
 Was turnid to a parliament,
 Where was ordainid and avised
 Evèry thing and wel devised
 That plesin might to most and lest, 1975
 And there concludid was the fest
 Within the yle for to behold
 With full consent of young and old,
 All in the same wise as before,
 As thing should be withoutin more, 1980
 And thei shippid and thithir went,
 And into straungè relmis sent,
 To kingis, quenes, and ducheßes,
 To divers princes and princeßes,
 Of ther lineage, and can them pray 1985
 That it might like them at that day
 Of mariage, for ther disport,
 Come se the yle and them disport,
 Where should be joustis and turnaies,
 And armis done in othir waies, 1990
 Signifying oer all the day
 Aftir Aprilis within May,
 And was avised that ladies tweine,
 Of gode estate and well befeine,
 With certaine knightis and squiers, 1995
 And of the quen's officers,
 In mannir of an embassade,
 With certain lettirs closed and made,

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Should take the bargè and depart,
 And seke my lady every part 2000
 Till they her found for any thing
 Both chargid have the quene and king,
 And as ther lady and maistres
 Her to beseke of gentilnes
 At the day there for to yben, 2005
 And oft her recommaund the quene,
 And prayis for all loves to hast,
 For but she come all woll be wast,
 And the fest but a businesse
 Withoutin joy or lustinesse, 2010
 And toke them tokins, and gode spede
 Praid God send 'hem astir ther nede.
 Forth went the ladies and the knights,
 And were out fourtene daies and nights,
 And brought my lady in ther barge, 2015
 And had well sped and done ther charge;
 Whereof the quene so herti'ly glad
 Was, that in soth such joy she had
 When that the ship approchid lond
 That she my lady on the sond 2020
 Met, and in armis so constraine,
 That wondir was behold them twaine,
 Which to my dome during twelve houres
 Neithir for hete ne watry shoures
 Departid not no company 2025
 Saving themselfe, but none them by,

But gave them layfour at ther ese
 To cherin joy and disese
 Astir the plesure and couragis
 Of ther young and tendir agis; 2030
 And astir with many a knight
 Brought thei were where as for that night
 They partid not, for to plesaunce
 Content was hert and countinaunce
 Both of the quene and my maistresse, 2035
 This was that night ther businesse;
 And on the morow with huge rowt
 This prince of lordis him about
 Come, and unto my lady said,
 Of her comming glad and well paid 2040
 He was, and full right conningly
 Her thankid and full hertily,
 And longh and smiled, and said, Ywis
 That was in doubt in safety is;
 And commaundid do diligence, 2045
 And spare for neithir gold ne spence,
 But make redy, for on the morow
 Yweddid, with Saint John to borow,
 He would ybe withoutin more,
 And let them wite this lese and more. 2050
 The morow come, and the service
 Of mariage in such a wise
 Ysaid was, that with more honour
 Was nevir prince ne conquerour

Ywedde, ne with such company 2055
 Of gentilnesse in chivalry,
 Ne of ladies so gretè routs,
 Ne so beseen as all abouts
 They werin there, I certifie
 You on my life, withoutin lie. 2060

And the fest hold was in tentis,
 As to tell you mine entent is,
 In a rome in a largè plaine,
 Undir a wode in a champaine,
 Betwixt a rivir and a well, 2065
 Where nevir had abbay ne fell
 Yben, ne kirke, house, ne village,
 In time of any man's age,
 And durid thre moniths the fest
 In one estate, and nevir cest 2070
 From erly rising of the sonne
 Till the day spent was and yronne
 In justing, dauncing, lustinesse,
 And all that fowned to gentilnesse.

And as me thought the second morow, 2075
 Whan endid was all oldè sorow,
 And in surety evèry wight
 Had with his lady slept a night,
 The prince, the quene, and all the rest,
 Unto my lady made request, 2080
 And her besought oftin and praied
 To mewardes to be well apaied,

And confidir mine oldè trouth,
And on my painis havin routh,
And me accept to her servise 2085
In such formè and in such wise
That we both mightin be as one;
Thus praied the quene and everichone;
And for there should ne be no nay
They stintin justing all a day 2090
To pray my lady, and requere
To be content and out of fere,
And with gode hert make frendly chere,
And said it was a happy yere;
At which she smiled, and said, Ywis 2095
I trow well he my servaunt is,
And would my welfare, as I trist,
So would I his, and would he wist
How and I knewè that his trouth
Continue would withoutin slouth, 2100
And be such as ye here report,
Restraining both courage and sport,
I couth consent at your request
To be ynamid of your fest,
And doin astir your usaunce 2105
In obeying of your plesaunce:
At your request this I consent,
To plesin you in your entent,
And eke the soveraine above,
Commandid hath me for to love, 2110

And before othir him prefer,
 Against which prince may be no wer,
 For his powir ovir all raigneth,
 That othir would for nought him paineth;
 And sith his will and yours is one 2115
 Contrary in me shall be none:
 Tho (as me thoughtin) the promise
 Of marriage before the mese
 Desirid was of every wight
 To be madin the samè night, 2120
 To put away all manir doubts
 Of evèry wight thereabouts;
 And so was do: and on the morew,
 When every thought and every sorrow
 Dislodgid was out of mine hert, 2125
 With every wo and every smert,
 Unto a tent prince and princes
 Me thought brought me and my maistres,
 And said we werin at full age
 There to conclude our marriage, 2130
 With ladies, knightis, and squiers,
 And a gret host of ministers,
 With instruments and founes diverse,
 That long werin here to reherse;
 Which tent was church parochiall, 2135
 Ordaint was in especiall
 For the fest and for the sacre,
 Where archbishop and archdiacre

Yfongin full out the servise
 Aftir the custome and the guise 2140
 And holie church'is ordinaunce :
 And aftir that to dine and daunce
 Brought were we, and to divers plaies,
 And for our spedè ech wight praies,
 And merry was both most and lest, 2145
 And said amendid was the fest,
 And were right glad lady and lord
 Of the marriage and th' accord,
 And wishid us hert'is plesauce,
 In joy and hele continuaunce, 2150
 And to the minstrils made request
 That in encrefing of the fest
 They wouldin touchin ther cordis,
 And with some new joyeux accordis
 Ymove the peple to gladnesse, 2155
 And praidin of all gentilnesse
 Ech to painin them for the day
 To shew his cunning and his play :
 Tho began fownis mervelous,
 Entunid with accords joyous, 2160
 Round about and in all the tents,
 With thousandis of instruments,
 That every wight to daunce them pained ;
 To be merry was none that fayned ;
 Which sowne me troublid in my slepe, 2165
 That fro my bed anone I lepe,

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Wening to have be at the fest,
 But when I woke all was yfest,
 For there n'as lady ne cature,
 Save on the wals old portraiture 2170
 Of horsmen, haukis, and houndis,
 And hurt dere all full of woundis,
 Some like bittin, some hurt with shot,
 And as my Dreame semed that was not.
 And when I wake and knew the trouth, 2175
 And ye had seen, of very routh
 I trow ye would have wept a weke,
 For nevir man yet halfe so seke
 Iwent escapid with the life,
 And was for fault that sword ne knife 2180
 I find ne might my life t'abridge,
 Ne thing that kervid ne had edge,
 Wherewith I might my wofull pains
 Have voidid with bleding of vains.
 Lo, here my blisse! lo, here my paine! 2185
 Which to my lady' I do complaine,
 And grace and mercy her requere
 To end my wo and busie fere,
 And me accept to her servise,
 And to her service in such wise, 2190
 That of my Dreame the substaunce
 Might turnin once to cognisaunce,
 And cognisaunce to very preve,
 By full consent and by gode leve; 2195

Or els withoutin more I pray 2195
 That this same night or it be day
 I mote unto my Drême retourne,
And sleping so forthe aie sojourne
 Aboutin the yle of plesaunce
 Undir my ladie's obeisaunce, 2200
 In her service, and in such wise
 As it plesse her may to devise,
 And grace onis to be accept
 Like as I dremid when I slept,
 And dure a thousand yere and ten 2205
 In her gode will. Amen, Amen!

L'ENVOY.

Fairist of faire, and godelyist on live!
 All my secre to you I plaine and shrive,
 Requiring grace, and of my fore complaint
 To be be helid or martired as a faint, 2210
 For by my trouth I swere, and by this boke,
 Ye may both hele and sle me with a loke.

Go forth, mine ownè true hert innocent,
 And with humbleness do thine observaunce,
 And to thy lady on thy knees present 2215
 Thy service new, and think how grete plesaunce
 It is to live undir the obeisaunce
 Of her which that may with her lokis soft
 Give the the blisse that thou desirist oft.

THE DREME OF CHAUCER.

85

Be diligent, awake, obey, and drede, 2220
And be not to wild of thy countinaunce,
But meke and glad, and thy nature yfede
To do ech thing that may her doe plesauce;
When thou shalt slepe have aie in remembraunce
Th' image of her which may with lokis soft 2225
Give the the blisse that thou desirist oft.

And if so be that thou her namè find
Writtin in boke, or ellis upon wall,
Loke that thou do, as servaunt true and kind,
Thine obeisaunce as she were therewithall: 2230
Fayning in love is breeding of a fall
From the grace of her whose lokis soft
May give the blisse that thou desirist oft.

Ye which that this ballade yredin shall
I pray you that you kepe you fro the fall. 2235

THE DREME OF CHAUCER.

I Have grete wonder, by this light,
Howe that I lyve, for daye ne night
I maye not slepin welny nought;
I have so many' an ydle thought,
Purely for the defeaute of slepe, 5
That by my trouth I take no kepe

The Dreme of Chaucer] By the person of a mourning knight
sitting under an oak is meant John of Gaunt, Duke of Lanca-
ster, greatly lamenting the death of one whom he entirely lo-
ved, supposed to be Blanch the Dutcheffs. Urry.

Volume XI.

H

Of nothing howe it cometh or gothe,
 Ne me n'ys nothing lese nor lothe;
 Al is ilichè gode to me
 Joye or sorowe where so it be, 10
 For I have felinge in nothing,
 But as it were a unafid thing
 Al day in pointe to fall adoun,
 For sorowful ymaginacioun
 Is alway wholly in my minde. 15

And well ye wote that againste kinde
 It were to livin in this wise,
 For Nature ne wolde not suffise
 Unto none erthy créature
 Not longè tymè to endure 20
 Withoutin slepe and be in sorowe,
 And I ne may ne night ne morowe
 Slepyn, and this melancolye
 And drede I havyn for to die;
 Defaute of slepe and hevynesse 25
 Hath flaine my spirite of quicknesse,
 That I have lost al lustihed;
 Soche fantasies ben in mine hed
 So I n'ot what is best to do:
 But men might askyn me whi so 30
 I may not slepe, and what me is?

But natheles who askith thys
 Lefeth his askyng trewily;
 My selvin can not tellin why

The sothe, but trewly, as I gesse, 35

I holde it be a sikènessè

That I have suffrid this eyght yere,

And yet my bote is ner the nere,

For there is phisicien but one

That may me hele; but that is done; 40

Passin we ovir until este;

That wil not bé mote nedes be leste:

Our first matir is gode to kepe.

So whan sawe I might not slepe

Til now of late this othir night 45

Upon my bedde I fate upright,

And bade one rechin me a boke,

A romauncè, and it me toke

To rede, and drive the night away;

For why? me thought it betir play 50

Than play either at chesse or tables.

And in this boke were writtin fables

That clerkis had in oldè time

And othir poetes put in rhyme

To rede, and for to be in minde, 55

While men lovid the lawe of kinde:

This boke ne spake but of soche thinges

Of quenis livis and of kinges,

And many othir thingis smale;

Amonge al this I fonde a tale 60

Whiche that me thought a wondir thing.

This was the tale: There was a king

H ij

That hight Ceix, and had a wife
 The best that mightin berin lyfe,
 And this quenè hight Alcyone; 65
 So it befil thereaftir sone

This king wol wendin ovir se :
 To tellin shortly, whan that he
 Was in the se thus in this wise
 Soche a tempest began to ryse 70
 That brake ther masse and made it fal,
 And clesfe ther ship and dreint'hem al,
 That nevir was founde, as it telles,
 Ne borde ne man, ne nothing elles:
 Right thus this king ylosfe his life. 75

Nowe for to spekin of his wife.
 This ladie that was leste at home
 Hath wondir that the kinge ne come
 Home, for it was a longè terme;
 Anon her herte began to yerne, 80
 And for that her thought evirmo
 It was not wele, her thoughtin so,
 She longid so aftir the king,
 That certes it were a pitous thing
 To tell her hertely sorowful lyfe 85
 Whiche that she had this noble wife,
 For him she lovid aldirbest;
 Anon she sent both est and west
 To seke him, but they founde him nought.
 Alas (quod she) that I was wrought! 90

And where my lorde my love be ded
 Certis I n'yl nevir ete bred,
 65 I make a vowe to my God here,
 But I mowe of my lordè here.

Soche sorowe this lady to' her toke 95
 That trewly I, that made this boke,
 Yhad soche pite and soche routhe
 70 To rede her sorowe, that by my trouthe
 I farid the worse al the morowe
 Afir to thinkin on her sorowe. 100

So whan that she coude here no worde
 That no man myghtin finde her lorde
 75 Ful ofte she swouned, and saide Alas!
 For sorow ful nigh wode she was,
 Ne she ne coude no rede but one, 105
 But downe on knees she sate anone
 And wept, that pite was to here.

A! mercy, my swete lady dere!
 80 Quod she to Juno, her goddesse,
 Helpith me out of this distresse, 110
 And yeve me grace my lorde to se
 Sone, or to wete where so he be,
 85 Or howe he fareth, or in what wise,
 And I shal make you sacrifice,
 And wholly yours become I shal, 115
 With gode wil, body, herte, and al;
 And but thou wolte this, lady swete!
 90 Sendin me grace to slepe, and mete

In my slepe some certaine swevin
Where through that I may knowe evin 120
Whethir my lorde be quicke or ded.

With that worde she hinge down the hed,
And fel in a swoune as colde as stone;
Her women caught her up anone,
And broughtin her in bed al naked, 125
And she forwepid and forwaked
Was wery, and thus the ded slepe
Yfel on her or she toke kepe,
Through Juno that had herde her bone,
That madin her to slepè sone; 130
For as she praide right so was don
In dede, for Juno right anon
Ycallid thus her messangere
To do' her eraunde, and he come nere:
Whan he was come she bad him thus; 135

Go bet (quod Juno) to Morpheus,
Thou knowest him wel, the god of Slepe;
Nowe understande wel, and take kepe,
Say thus on my behalfe, that he
Go fast into the gretè se, 140
And bid him that on allè thinge
He take up Ceix body the kinge,
That lieth ful pale and nothings rody;
Byd him crepin into the body,
And do it gone to Alcyone 145
The quene there she lyith alone,

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And shewe her shortely' it is no nay
 Howe it was dreint this othir day,
 And do the body speke right so
 Right as it was wonnid to do
 The whilis that it was alyve :
 Goith nowe fast, and hye the blive.

150

This messanger toke leve and went
 Upon his way, and nevre' he stente
 Tyl he came to the darke valey
 That stante betwixtin rockis twey,
 There nevir yet grewe corne ne gras,
 Ne tre, ne nothing that ought was,
 Ne best ne man, ne nothing elles,
 Save that there werin a fewe welles
 Came renning fro the clyffes adowne
 That made a dedly slepinge sowne,
 And rennin downe right by a cave
 That was undir a rocke ygrave
 Amyd the valey wondir depe
 There as these goddis lay a slepe,
 Morpheus and Eclympasleyre,
 That was the god of Slep'is heire,
 That slepte and did none othir werke.

155

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165

This cave ywas also as derke
 As hel pitte; ovir all aboute
 They had gode leysir for to route
 To vye who mightin slepè best;
 Some hinge ther chinne upon ther brest,

170

And slepte upright ther hed yhed, 175
 And some lay nakid in ther bed,
 And sleptin whiles their dayis last.

This messaunger come renning fast,
 And cried, Ho, ho! awake anone!
 It was for naught; there herde him none: 180
 Awake, (quod he) who lyith there?
 And blewe his horne right in ther ere,
 And cried Awakith! wondir hie.

This god of Slepe with his one eye
 Cast up, and asked Who clepith there? 185
 It am I, (quod this messangere)
 Juno bade that thou shouldist gone,
 And toldin him what he should done
 As I have tolde you here before,
 It is no nede reherse it more, 190
 And wente his way whan he had faide.
 Anone this god of Slepe abraide
 Out of his slepe and gan to go,
 And did as he had bidde him do;
 He toke up the ded body sone, 195
 And bare it forthe to Alcyone
 His wife, the quene, there as she lay,
 Right even a quartir before day,
 And stode right at her bedd'is fete,
 And callid her right as she hete 200
 By name, and said; My swetè wife!
 Awake, let he your sorowful lyfe,

- 175 For in your sorow there lyth no rede,
 For certes, swete love! I am but dede;
 Ye shall me ner on lyve yse: 205
 But, gode swete herte! I praye that ye
 Bury my body; soche a tide
 180 Ye mowe it finde the se beside:
 And farewell swete! my world'is blisse!
 I pray that God your sorowe lyffe: 210
 To lytel while our blisse ylasteth.
 With that her eyin up she casteth,
 185 And sawe naught. Alas! for sorowe
 She died within the thirde morowe.
 But what she said more in that swowe 215
 I may nat tellin you as now;e;
 It were to longè for to dwel:
 190 My first matere I wil you tel
 Wherfore I have ytolde this thinge
 Of Alcyone and Ceix the kinge. 220
 For thus moche dare I sayin well,
 I had be dolvin everidel,
 195 And ded, right through defaute of slepe,
 Yf I ne had red and take kepe
 Of this ilke talè next before, 225
 And I wil tellin you wherfore,
 For I ne might for bote ne bale
 200 Slepyn or I had redde this tale
 Of this ydreinte Ceix the kinge,
 And of the goddis of Slepinge. 230

Whan I had red this talè wele,
 And ovrloked it everidele,
 Me thought wondir if it were so,
 For I had ner herde speke or tho
 Of no goddis that couldin make 235
 Men for to slepe ne for to wake,
 And I ne knewe ner God but one,
 And in my game I said anone,
 (And yet me lyst right il to pley)
 Rathir than that I shuldin dey 240
 Thorough defeaute of slepinge thus
 I woldin gyve thilke Morpheus,
 Or that goddesse hight Dame Juno,
 Or some wight els, I ne rought who,
 To make me slepe and have some rest 245
 I will give him the althir best
 Yeste that er he abode his lyve,
 And hereonwarde right now as blyve,
 If he woll make me slepe a lite,
 Of downe of purè dovis white 250
 I wol yeve him a fethir bed
 Rayid with gold, and right wel cled
 In fine blacke sattin doutremere,
 And many'a pilowe', and every bere
 Of clothe of Raines to slepe on softe, 255
 Him thare not nede to turnin ofte;
 And I wol yeve him al that falles
 To his chambre and to his halles,

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I wol do painte 'hem with pure golde,
And tapite 'hem ful many folde ; 260

Of one sute this shal he yhave,
If that I wiste where were his cave,

235 If he can make me slepin sone,
As did the goddesse Quene Alcyone;

And thus this ylke god Morpheus 265
May winnin of me mo fees thus

240 Than er he wanne; and to Juno
That 'is his goddesse I shall so do,

I trowe that she shal holde her paide.

I had unneth that worde ifaide, 270

Right thus as I have toldin you,

Than sodeinly, I ne wiste howe,

245 Soche a luste anone me ytoke
To slepe, that right upon my boke

I fel aslepe, and therwith even 275

Me mette so inly soche a sweven,

So wondirfull, that nevir yet

250 I trowe no man ne had the wit

To connin wel my swevin rede,

No, nought Joseph withoutin drede 280

Of Egypt, he which that rad so

The king 'is metinge Pharaos,

255 No more than coude the leste of us,

Ne nat scarfly Macrobeus,

He that wrote al the 'avision 285

Whiche that he met Kinge Scipion,

The noble man, the Affrican,
 Soche mervailis fortunid than
 I trowe, arede my dremis even ;
 Lo! thus it was, this was my sweven : 290
 Me thoughtin thus, that it was Maye,
 And in the dawning there I lay
 Me met thus in my bed al naked,
 And lokid forthe, for I was waked
 With smalè foulis a gret hepe, 295
 That had afraied me' out of my slepe
 Through noife and swetnesse of ther songe;
 And as me met they fate amonge
 Upon my chambre rose without,
 Upon the tyles ovre' al about, 300
 And evèrliche songe in his wise
 The moſte ſwete and ſolempne ſerviſe
 By note that evir man I trowe
 Had herde, for ſome of 'hem ſonge lowe,
 Some high, and al of one accorde : 305
 To tellin ſhortly, at o worde,
 Was nevir herde ſo ſwete a ſleven,
 But it had be a thinge of heven,
 So merie' a ſowne, ſo ſwete entunes,
 That certis for the towne of Tewnes 310
 I n'olde but I had herde 'hem ſinge,
 For al my chambre gan to ringe
 Through ſinging of ther harmony,
 For instrument nor melody

Was no where herde yet halfe so swete, 315
 Nor of acordè halfe so mete,
 For there was none of 'hem that fained
 To finge, for eche of 'hem him pained
 To finde out many crafty notes,
 They ne ysparid nat ther throtes; 320
 And, soth to faine, my chambre was
 Ful wel depaintid, and with glas
 Were al the windowes wel yglasid
 Ful clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
 'That to beholde it was grete joy, 325
 For wholly al the story' of Troy
 Was in the glaifinge ywrought thus,
 Of Hector and Kinge Priamus,
 Achilles and Kinge Lamedon,
 And eke Medea and Jafon, 330
 Of Paris, Heleine and Lavine;
 And al the walles with colours fine
 Were paintid, bothè texte and glofe,
 And al The Romaunte of the Rose:
 My wyndowes werin shet ech one, 335
 And through the glasse the sunne yshone
 Upon my bed with bright bemis,
 With many glad gildy stremis;
 And eke the welkin was so faire,
 Blewe, bright, and clere, ywas the ayre, 340
 And ful attempre', in sothe it was,
 For neithir colde ne hote it n'as,

Ne' in al the welkin was no clowde.

And as I lay thus, wondir lowde
Me thought I herde an huntir blowe 345
T' affay his gret horne, and to knowe
Whethre' it was clere or horse of sowne;

And I herde goynge up and downe
Men, horfis, houndes, and othir thinge,
And al men spekin of huntinge, 350
How they wolde fle the harte with strength,
And how the harte had upon length
So moche enbofed, I n'ot nowe what.

Anon right whan I herdin that,
How that they wolde on huntinge gone, 355
I was right glad, and up anone

I toke my horse, and forth I wente
Out of chambre; I nevir stente
Tyl I come to the felde without,
There ovirtoke I a grete rout 360
Of huntirs and of foresters,

And many relaies and limers,
'That hied 'hem to the forest fast,
And I with 'hem: so at the last
I askid one lad, a lymere, 365

Say, felowe, who shal huntin here?

(Quod I) and he answered ayen,

Sir, the Emperour Octonyen,

(Quod he) and he is here faste by.

A goddes halfe, in gode tyme, (quod I) 370

Than go we fast, and gan to ride :

Whan we come to the forest side

Evèry man ydyd right sone

As unto huntinge fel to done.

The maistrir hunte anone fote hote

With his clere horne yblewe thremote

At the uncouplinge of his houndis.

Within a while the harte founde is :

I halowed and rechafid fast

A longe time : and so at the last

This harte rousid and stale away

Fro al the houndes a privy way.

The houndes had ovrishot him all,

And were on a defaulte yfal,

Therwith the hont full wondir fast

Yblewe a forloyn at the laste :

I was go walkid fro my tre,

And as i went there came by me

A whelpe, that fawned me as i stode,

That had folowed and coude no gode ;

It came and crepte to me as lowe,

Right as it had me wele yknowe,

Helde down his hed and joyned his eres,

And laide al smothe adowne his heres.

I wolde have caught it up anone ;

It fled, and was fro me ygone :

As i folowed and it forth went,

Downe by a floury grene it went

Ful thick of grasse ful softe and swete,
 With flouris sele fare undir fete, 400
 And lytil used, it semid thus,
 For bothe Flora and Zephyrus,
 They two that makin flouris growe,
 Had made ther dwelling there I trowe,
 For it was on for to beholde 405
 As though the erthe there envye wolde
 To be gayir than is the heven,
 To havin mo flouris soche seven
 As in the welkin steris be,
 It had forget the povirte 410
 Of Wintir, through his coldè morowes
 That made it suffre, and his sorowes
 Al was forieten, and that was sene,
 For all the wode was woxin grene,
 Swetnesse of dewe had made it waxe. 415
 It is no nede eke for to axe
 Where there were many grene greves,
 Or thicke of trees so ful of leves,
 And every tree stode by him selve
 Fro othir wel ten fote or twelve, 420
 So grete trees and so huge of strength,
 Of fourty' or fifty fadome length,
 All clene withoutin bowe or flicke,
 With croppis brode, and eke as thicke,
 They werin not an ynche asonder, 425
 That it was shadde ovir all under;

And many' an hart and many' an hinde
 Was both before me and behinde,
 Of fawnis, fowirs, buckis, does,
 Was ful the wodde, and many roes, 430
 And many squirrilis, that sete
 Ful high upon the trees and cte,
 And in ther manir madin festes :
 Shortly, it was so ful of bestes
 That though Argus the noble countour 435
 Yfate to rekin in his countour,
 And rekin with his figures ten,
 For by tho figures newe al ken
 If they be crafty, reken and nombre,
 And tel of every thing the nombre, 440
 Yet shulde he faile to rekin even
 The wonders me met in my sweven :
 But forthe I romed right wondir faste
 Downe through the wode; so at the lasse
 I was ware of a man in blacke, 445
 That fate, and had yturned his backe
 Unto an ooke and hugè tre;
 Lord ! tho thought I, who may that be ?
 What eylith him to sittin here ?
 And anon right I went him nere; 450
 Than founde I fitte evin upright
 A wondir faire welfaring knight,
 By the manir me thoughtin so
 Of gode mokil, right yonge therto,

Of the' age of foure-and-twenty yere, 455
Upon his berde but litil here,
And he was clothid al in blacke;
I stalkid even unto his backe;
And there I stode as stil as ought,
The sothe to say he saw me nought; 460
For why? he hinge his hed adowne,
And with a dedly sorowful sowne
He made of rime ten verses or twelve
Of a complainte unto himselve,
The moste pite and the most routh 465
That evir I herde, for by trouthe
It was grete wondir that Nature
Might suffre any creature
To have soche sorow' and he not ded;
Ful pitous, pale, and nothing red, 470
He said a lay, a manir songe,
Withoutin note, withoutin songe,
And was this, for ful wel I can
Reherse it; right thus it began:
I have of sorowe so grete wone, 475
That joye ne get I nevir none,
Nowe that I se my lady bright,
Which I have loved with all my might,
Is fro me ded, and is agone,
And thus in sorowe' leste me alone: 480
Alas! o Dethe! what eylith the
That thou n'oldist have takin me

455

Whan that thou toke my lady swete ?

Of all godenes she had none mete,

That was so faire, so freshe, so fre,

485

So gode, that men may wel yse.

460

Whan he had made thus his complainte

His sorowful hert gan fast fainte,

And his spiritis wexin dede,

The blode was fledde for purè drede

490

Downe to his herte to maken him warme,

For wel it feled the herte had harme,

465

To wete eke why it was adradde,

By kinde, and for to make it gladde,

For it is membre principal

495

Of the body, and that made al

His hewe ychaunge, and wexin grene

470

And pale for there no blode is sene

Within no manir lymme of his.

Anon therwith, whan I sawe this,

500

He farde thus yvil there he sete,

I went and stode right at his sete,

475

And grette him, büt he spake right nought,

But arguid with his owne thought,

And in his witte disputid faste

505

Bothe why and howe his lyfe might laste,

Him thought his sorowes were so smerte,

480

And lay so colde upon his herte.

So through his sorowe' and holy thought

Made him that he ne herde me nought,

510

For he had welnye lost his minde,
Though Pan, that men clepe god of Kinde,
Were for his sorowes ner so wrothe.

But at the last, to faine right sothe,
He was ware of me howe I stode 515
Before him and did of my hode,
And had gret him as I best coude
Debonairly and nothing loude;
He said, I pray the be not wrothe,
I herde the not, to faine the sothe, 520
Ne I sawe the not, Sir, truely.

Ah, gode Sir! tho no force (quod I)
I am right fory' if I have ought
Distroublid you out of your thought;
Forieue me if I have myffetake. 525

Yes, the amendes is light to make,
(Quod he) for there lithè non therto;
There is nothing missaide nor do.

Lo howe godely yspake this knight,
As it had be anothir wight, 530
And made it neithir tough ne queint!
And I sawe that, and gan me' aqueint
With him, and founde him so trefable,
Right wondir skylful and reso'nable,
As me thoughtin, for all his bale, 535
Anon right I gan finde a tale
To him, to loke where I might ought
Have more knowleging of his thought.

Sir, (quod I) this game is ydone,
 I holde that this hart be ygone, 540
 These huntis can him no where se.

I do no force therof, (quod he)
 My thought is theron ner a dele. 545
 By' our Lorde (quod I) I trowe you wele,
 Right so me thiſkith by your chere;
 But, Sir, o thing wollin ye here?

Me thinketh in gret ſorowe' I you ſe,
 But certis, Sir, and if that ye 550
 Wolde aught diſcovir me your wo
 I wolde, as wiſe God helpe me ſo, 555
 Amende it if I can or may,

Ye mowin prove it by aſſay,
 For by my trouthe, to make you whole 560
 I wol do al my powir whole;
 And telleth me of your ſorowes ſinert, 565
 Paraunter it may eſe your herre,
 That ſemeth ful ſyke undir your ſide.

With that he loked on me aſide,
 As who ſaith the nay, that n'yl not be.

Graunt mercy, my gode frende! (quod he) 565
 I thanke the that thou woldiſt ſo,
 But it may ner the rather he do;
 No man ne may my ſorowe glade, 570
 That maketh my hewe to fal and fade,
 And hath myn underſtanding lorne, 575
 That me is wo that I was borne;

May nought make my sorowis flyde,
 Not all the rem'edies of Ovide,
 Ne Orpheus, god of Melodie,
 Ne Dædalus, with his playes flye, 370
 Ne hele me may no physicien,
 Nought Hippocrates ne Galen;
 Me' is wo that I live houris twelve;
 But whofo wol assaye him selve
 Whether his hert can have pite 375
 Of any sorowe let him se me,
 I wretche, that dethe hath made al naked
 Of al the blisse that er was maked,
 I wrothe, the werste of allè wightes,
 That hate my dayis and my nightes; 380
 My lyfe, my lustis, be me lothe,
 For allè fare and I be wrothe;
 The pure deth is so ful my foe
 That I wolde die it wil not foe,
 For whan I folowe' it it wil flye, 385
 I wold have him it n'il not me;
 And this is paine withoutin rede,
 Alway dyinge and be not dede,
 That Sifyphus that lyeth in hel
 Nay may not of more sorowe tel; 390
 And who so wiste al, by my trouthe,
 All my sorowe, but he hadde routhe
 And pyte of my sorowes smerte
 That man yhath a fendely herte,

For whoso seeth me first on morowe 595

May sayne that he hath met with Sorowe,

For I am Sorowe', and Sorowe' is I;

Alas! and I wyl tel the why,

My sorowe' is tournid to playnyng,

And al my laughtir to weping, 600

My glad thoughtis to hevynesse,

In travaile is myn ydlenesse,

And eke my rest, my wele is wo,

My gode is harme, and evirmo

In wrathe is tournid my playing, 605

And my delite in sorowing,

Myn hele is turned into sickenesse,

In drede is al my syckerneffe,

To derke is turnid al my lyght,

My wytte is foly, my day night, 610

My love is hate, my slepe wakyng,

My mirth and melis is fasting,

My countinaunce is nicete,

And al abawed where so I be,

My pece is pleding, and in werre, 615

Alas, howe might I fare in werre!

My boldenesse is turnid to shame,

For false Fortune hath played a game

At chesse with me, alas the while!

The trayteresse false and ful of gyle, 620

That al behoteth and nothing halte,

She gothe upright and yet she halte,

That baggith foule and lokith fayre,
 The dispitous and debonaire,
 That scornith many a creture;
 An ydole of false purtraiture
 Is she, for she wol sonè wryen;
 She is the monstri's hed ywryen,
 As filthe, ovir ystrowed with floures,
 Her mostè worship, and her floures,
 To lyen, for that is her nature,
 Withoutin faith, lawe, or mesure,
 She false is, and evir laughing
 With one eye, and that othir weping,
 That is brought up she set al downe;
 I likin her to the scoriowne,
 That is a false and flateryng best,
 For with his hed he makith fest,
 But al amynd his flatiringe
 With his taile he wil forely styng,
 And envenim, and so wil she;
 She is the envious Charite,
 That is aye false and semith wele,
 So turnith she her false whele
 About, for it is nothing stable,
 Nowe by the fyre nowe at the table;
 Ful many' one hath she thus yblent;
 She is playe of enchauntement,
 That semith one and is not so:
 The false thefe what hath she do

625

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650

Trowest thou? by' our Lorde I wil the say.

At cheffe with me she gan to play;

With her false draughtis ful divers

She stale on me, and toke my fers;

And whan I sawe my fers away,

655

Alas! I couth no lengir play,

But sayid, Farewel swete! ywis,

And farewel al that er there is;

Therwith Fortune ysayid Cheke here,

And mate in the' myd poynt of the' checkere 660

With a paunè errant. Alas!

Ful craftyir to play she was

Than Athalus, that made the game

Firsh of the cheffe, so was his name;

But God wolde I had ones or twise

665

Iconde and knowe the jeoperdise

That coude the Greke Pythagores,

I shulde have plaide the bet at ches,

And kept my fers the bet ther by;

And though wherto? for trewily

670

I holde that wishe not worthe a fire,

It had be ner the bet for me,

For Fortune can so many' a wyle

Ther be but fewe can her begile,

And eke she is the lasse to blame,

675

My selfe I wolde have do the same,

Before God, had i ben as she,

She ought the more excusid be;

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For this I say yet more therto,
Had I be God, and might have do 680
My wyl, whan she my fers ycaught
I wolde have drawn the samè draught,
For al so wise God gyve me reste
I dare wel swere she toke the beste,
But through that draught I have ylorne 685
My blyffe, alas that I was borne!
For evirmore I trowe trewly,
For al my wil, my luste wholly
Is turne, but wote ye what to done?
By' our Lorde it is to dyin sone, 690
For nothings I ne leve it nought
But lyve and dye right in this thought;
'There n'ys planet in firmamente,
Ne' in ayre ne' in erthe nonè elemente,
'That they ne yeve me' a yeste echone 695
Of wepyng whan I am alone,
For whan that I advise me wele,
And bethinke me evèrydele
How that there lieth in rekinige
In my sorowis for nothings, 700
And howe there livith no gladnesse
May gladdinge of my distresse,
And howe I have losse suffisaunce,
And therto I have no plesaunce,
Than may I say I have right nought; 705
And whan al this falleth in my thought,

680 Alas! than am I ovircome,
For that is done this not to come:
I have more sorowe than Tantale.

And whan I herde him tel this tale 710
Thus pitously as I you tell,
Unnethis myght I lengir dwell,
685 It did myn herte so mochill wo.

A, gode Sir! (quod I) say nat so,
Have some pite on your nature, 715
That fourmid you to a creture;
Remembrith you of Socrates,
690 For he ne countith not thre strees
Of nought that Fortune coude ydo.

No, (quod he) I ne can not so. 720
Why, gode Sir, yes parde, (quod I)
Ne say not so, for truily
695 Though ye had lost the ferfis twelve,
And for sorowe mūdrid your selve,
Ye shulde be dampnid in this case, 725
By as gode right as Medea was,
That slough her childrin for Jafon,
700 And Phyllis for Demophoon,
That hing her self, so welaway!
For he had brokin his terme day 730
To come to her. Anothir rage
Had Dido, the Quene of Carthage,
705 That slough her self for Æneas
Was false, for whiche a sole she was;

And Echo dyed for Narcissus 733
 Ne wolde nat love her; and right thus
 Hath many' an othir foly done,
 And for Dalila died Sampfone,
 That sloughe him selfe with a pilere;
 But there is no man alive here 740
 Wolde for ther feris make this wo.

Why so? (quod he) it is not so,
 Thou wotest ful lytil what thou menest,
 For I have losse more than thou wenest.
 And howe may that ybe? (quod I) 745
 Gode Sir, tellith me al wholly
 In what wise, howe, why, and wherfore,
 That ye have thus your blisse ylore.

Blithely, (quod he;) come, sit the doun;
 I tel the on condicioun 750
 Thou shalte wholly with all thy wit
 Do thyne entente to herkin it.

Yes, Sir. Than swere thy trouthe therto,
 Gladly to holdin the hereto.
 I shal right blithe, so God me save, 755
 Wholly with all the witte I have
 Here you as wel as er I can.
 A Godde's halfe, (quod he) and began.

Sir, (quod he) sithins firste I couthe
 Have any manir witte fro youthe, 760
 Or kindily understandinge
 To comprehende in any thinge

733 What love was in mine ownè wit,
 Dredileffe I have evir yet
 Be tributary and yevè rente 765
 To Love wholly, with gode entente,
 740 And through plessaunce become his thral
 With gode wil, body, herte, and al;
 Al this I put in his servage
 As to my lorde, and dyd homage; 770
 And full devoutly' I praide hym tho
 He shulde beset myne hertè so
 745 That it plessaunce unto him were
 And worship to my lady dere.

And this was long and many' a yere 775
 (Er that min hert was set o where)
 750 That I dyd thus, and ne wist why,
 I trowe it came me kindily;
 Paraunter I was therto most able
 As a white wal or a table, 780
 For it' is redy to catche and take
 Al that men wollin therin make,
 755 Whethir men will portrey or painte,
 Be the werkis nevir so quainte.

And thilke tyme I farid right so, 785
 I was able to' have lernid tho,
 And to have conde as wel or better
 Parauntir eithir arte or lettir,
 760 But for love came first in my thought
 Therefore I ne forgate it nought; 790

I chees love to be my first craste,
 And therefore it is with me laste;
 For why? I toke' it of so yonge age
 That malice ne had my corage,
 Not that time turnid to nothing 795
 Thorough to mokil knowleging,
 For that tyme Youth my maistresse
 Governid me in ydilnesse,
 For it was in my firstè youth,
 And though ful litil gode I couthe, 800
 For al my werkis were flittyng
 That time, and al my thought varying,
 Al thinges were to me yliche gode,
 That knewe I tho, but thus it stode:
 It happed that I came on a day 805
 In to a place there that I sey
 Trewly the fairist companie
 Of ladies that er man with eye
 Had sene toghithers in o place;
 Shal I clepe it happe eithir grace 810
 That brought me there? nought but Fortune,
 That is to lyin ful comune,
 The falsè traitresse perverse,
 God wolde that I coulde clepe her werse,
 For now she worchith me ful wo, 815
 And I wol tel the sone why so.
 Amonges these ladies thus echone,
 The sothe to sayin, I sawe one

That ne was lyke none of the route,
 For I dare swere, withoutin doute, 820
 That as the sommer's sonnè bright
 Is fairer, clerer, and hath more lyght,
 Than any other planet in heven,
 The monè or the sterris seven,
 For al the worlde right so had she, 825
 Surmountin 'hem al of beaute,
 Of manir, and of comlynesse
 Of stature, and wel set gladnesse,
 Of godelyhede, and so wel besey,
 Shortly, what shal I more ysey? 830
 By God and by his holowes twelve
 It was my swete right al her selve;
 She had so stedfast countenaunce,
 So noble porte and maintenaunce,
 And Love, that wel yherde my bone, 835
 Yhad espyid me thus sone
 That she fill sonè in my thought;
 As helpe me God so was I cought
 So sodainly, that I ne toke
 No maner counsaile but at her loke 840
 And at min herte; for why? her eyen
 So gladly I trowe myn herte feyne,
 That purely tho min ownè thought
 Said it were bet serve her for nought
 Than with anothir to be wele; 845
 And it was sothe, for every dele

795

800

805

810

815

I wil anone right tel the why :

I sawe her daunce so comily,
 Carol and sing so swetily,
 And laugh and play so womanly, 850
 And lokin so debonairly,
 So godely speke and so frendely,
 That certes I trowe that evirmore
 N'as sene so blisful a trefore ;
 For evèry here on her hed, 855
 The sothe to say, it was not red,
 Ne neithir yelowè ne browne it n'as,
 Me thought moste like to golde it was ;
 And whiche eyin my lady had,
 Debonaire, gode, and glad, and fad, 860
 Simple', of gode mokil, not to wide ;
 Therto her loke n'as not afide,
 Ne ovirthwart, but beset so wele
 It drewe and toke up everydele
 Al whiche that on her gan beholde ; 865
 Her eyin semed anone she wolde
 Have mercy, Folly wendin so,
 But it was ner the rathir do ;
 It n'as no counterfetid thinge,
 It was her ownè pure loking, 870
 Whiche that the goddesse Dame Nature
 Had made 'hem opin by mesure
 And close, for were she ner so glad
 Her loking was not folishe sprad

Ne wildily though that she plaide,
 But er me thought her eyin faide
 By God my wrathe is al forieue;
 Therwith her lifte so well to live
 That Dulnesse was of her adrad;
 She n'as to sobre ne to glad;
 In allè thingis møre mesure
 Ne had nevir I trowe creture;
 But many' one with her loke she herte,
 And that fate her full lyte at herte,
 For she knewe nothings of ther thought;
 But wher she knewe or knewe it nought
 Algate she ne' rought of 'hem a stre;
 To get her love no nere n'as he
 That woned at home than he in Inde;
 The formist was alway behinde;
 But gode folke ovir al othir
 She loved as man may his brothir,
 Of whiche love she was wendir large
 In skilful placis that bere charge;
 But whiche a visage had she therto!
 Alas! my herte is wondir wo
 That I ne can discrivin it,
 Me lackith bothe Englishe and wit
 For to undo it at the ful,
 And eke my spirites ben so dull
 So gret a thinge for to devise;
 I have no wyt that can suffyse

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To comprehendin her Beaute ;
 But thus moche I dare faine, that she
 Was white, rody, freshe, lifely hewed,
 And every day her Beaute newed ;
 And nyghe her face was aldirbeste,
 For certis Nature had soche leste
 To make that faire, that trewly she
 Was her chese patron of Beaute,
 And chese ensample' of al her werke
 And monstre, for be' it ner so derke
 Me thinketh I se her evirmo ;
 And yet morecovir, though al tho
 That ever lived were now a lyve
 Ne wolde thei have founde to discrive
 In al her face a wickid signe,
 For it was sad, simple', and benigne.

And soche a godely swetè speche
 Yhad that swete, my lyv'is leche,
 So frendely, and so well ygrounded,
 Upon reson so wel ifounded,
 And so trefable to al gode,
 That I dare swere wel by the rode
 Of eloquence was nevir fonde
 So swete a sowning and faconde,
 Ne trewir tonged, ne scornid lasse,
 Ne bet coude hele, that by the masse
 I durste swere, though the Pope it songe,
 That ther was ner yet through her tonge

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Man ne woman gretly harmid,
 As for her was al harme yhid,
 Ne lasse flatiring in her worde,
 That purely her simple recorde
 Was founde as trewe as any bonde
 Or trouthe of any mann'is honde.

935

Ne chide she coulde nevir a dele,
 That knowith al the worlde ful wele.
 But soche a fairenesse of a necke
 Yhad that swete, that bone nor brecke
 N'as there none sein that missefatte,
 It was white, smothe, streight, and pure flatte,
 Withoutin hole or canel bone,
 And by seming she ne had none.

940

Her throte, as I have nowe memoire,
 Semed as a rounde tour of yvoire,
 Of gode gretnesse, and not to grete;
 And Fairè White ywas she hete,
 That was my ladies namè right,
 And she was therto faire and bright;
 She ne had not her namè wronge:
 Right faire sholdirs and body longe
 She had, and armis evir lith,
 Fattishe, fleshy, nat grete ther with;
 Right white handis, and nailis rede;
 Rounde brestis; and of a gode brede
 Her hippis were; a streight flatte backe,
 I knewe on her none othir lacke,

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'That al her limmis n'ere pure sewing,
In as ferre as I had knowing :

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'Therto she coulede so wel yplaye
What that her lyfte, that I dare saye
That she was lyke to torchè bright,
That every man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath ner the lesse
Of manir and of comlynesse.

965

Right so farid my lady dere,
For every wight of her manere
Moght catche ynough if that he wolde,
Yf he had eyen her to beholde,
For I dare swere wel if that she
Had among tenne thoufande ybe
She woldin have be at the beste
A chefe myroure of al the fesse,
Though they had stondin in a rowe
'To mennis eyen that coulede have knowe;
For where so men had plaide or waked
Me thought the felowshippe as naked
Withoutin her that I sawe ones
As a corowne withoutin stones;
'Trewily she was to min eye
The' solein phœnix of Arabye,
For there livith nevir but one,
Ne suche as she ne knowe I none :
'To speke of godenesse, trewly she
Had as mochil debonaire

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960 As er had Hester in the Bible,
 And more, if more were possible;
 And, sothe to sayin, therwithal
 She hadde a witte so general, 990
 So whole enclinid to al gode,
 That al her witte was sette by the' rode
 965 Without malyce, upon gladnesse;
 And therto' I sawe ner yet a lesse
 Harmful than she was in doing; 995
 I say not that she n' hadde knowyng
 What harme ywas, or ellis she
 970 Had coude no gode, so thinkith me;
 And trewly for to speke of trouthe,
 But she had had it had be routhe, 1000
 Therof she had so moche her dele,
 And I dare saine and swere it wele,
 975 That Trouthe him selfe over al and al
 Had chose his manor principal
 In her, that was his resting place; 1005
 Therto she had the moste grace
 To have stedfaste perseveraunce,
 980 And esy' attempre govirnaunce,
 That evir I knewe or wiste yet,
 So pure sufferaunt was her wit;
 1010 And reson gladly she' understode,
 It folowid wel she coude gode;
 985 She usid gladly to do wele:
 These were her manirs every dele.

Therwith she lovid so wel right
 She wronge do wouldin to no wight;
 No wight ne might do her no shame,
 She lovid so wel her owne name.

1015

Her lust to holde no wight in honde,
 Ne be thou liker she wolde not fonde
 To holdin no wight in balaunce
 By halfe worde ne by countinaunce,
 But if men wolde upon her lye,
 Ne sende men into Walakye,
 To Pruise and to Tartarie,
 To Alifaundrie ne Turkye,
 And bidde him fast anon that he
 Go hodelesse into the drie se,
 And come home by the Carrenare;

1020

1025

And, Sir, be ye nowe full ryght ware
 That I may of you here men faine
 Wurshippe or that ye come againe.

1030

She ne used no soche knackis smale:
 But therfore that I tel my tale,
 Right on this fame, as I have saide,
 Was wholly al my love ylaide,
 For certis she was that swete wife,
 My suffisaunce, my luste, my life,
 Min hope, min bele, and al my bleffe,
 My worlde's welfare and my goddesse,
 And I wholly' hers, and every dele.

1035

1040

By' our Lorde! (quod I) I trowe you wele,

Hardly your love was wel beset,
I n'ot howe it might have do bet.

Bettir! ne not so wel (quod he.)
I trowe it, Sir, (quod I) parde.

Nay leve it wel. Sir, so do I;
I leve you wel that trewily
You thought that she ywas the best,
And to beholde the alderfairest,
Who so had loked her with your eyen.

With myn! nay, al whiche that her seyen
Sayid and swore that it was so,

And though they ne had I wolde tho
Have lovid best my lady fre

Though I had had al the beaute
That er had Alcibiades,

And al the strenght of Hercules,
And thereto had the worthinesse
Of Alisaundre', and al the' richesse

That evir was in Babyloine,
In Carthage or in Macedoine,

Or in Rome or in Ninive,
And therto al so hardy be

As was Hector, so have I joye,
That Achilles yslough at Troye,
And therfore was he slayne also

In a temple, for bothè two
Were slaine, he' and Antilegius,
And so faithe Dares Fregius,

For the love of Polixena,
 Or ben as wise as Minerva,
 I wolde evir withoutin drede
 Have lovid her, for I muste nede.

Nede! nay, trewly I gabbè now; 1075
 Nought nede, and I wol tellin howe,
 For of gode wil min herte it wolde,
 And eke to love her I was holde,
 As for the fairist and the beste;
 She was as gode, so have I reste, 1080
 As was Penelope of Grece,
 Or as the noble wise Lucrece,
 That was the beste, he tellith thus
 The Romane Titus Livius,
 She was as gode, and nothing like, 1085
 Though ther stories be autentike,
 Algate she was as trewe as she.

But wherfore that I tellin the,
 Whan that I first my lady sey
 I was right yonge, the sothe to sey, 1090
 And ful gret nede I had to lerne,
 Whan that myn hertè woldin yerne;
 To love it was a gret emprise,
 But as my wite wolde beste suffise;
 Aftir my yonge and childely wit 1095
 Withoutin drede I beset it
 To lovin her in my beste wise,
 To do' her wurship and the servise

Whiche that I coude tho, by my trouthe,
 Withoutin faining eithir flouthe, 11100
 For wondir faine I wolde her se;
 So mokill it amendid me,
 That whan I sawe her a morowe
 I was warished of al my sorowe
 Of al day aftir, tel' it were eve; 11105
 Me thoughtin nothings might me greve
 Were my sorowes nevir so smerte,
 And yet she syt so in min herte
 That by my trouthe I n'oldè nought
 For al this worlde out of my thought 11110
 Yleve my lady; no trewly.

Nowe by my trouthe, Sir, (quod I)
 Me thinkith ye have soche a chaunce
 As shriste withoutin repentaunce.

Repentaunce! nay, nay; fye! (quod he) 11115
 Shuldin I nowe repentin me
 To love? nay, certes, than were I wel
 Worse than ywas Achitophel
 Or Antenor, so have I joye,
 The traitour that betrayid Troye, 11120
 Or than the false Ganelion,
 He that purchasid the traifon
 Of Roulande and of Oliver: e
 Nay, while that I am alive here
 I n'yl foriet her nevirmo. 11125

Nowe, gode Sir, quod I to him tho,

Ye have wel tolde me here before,
 It' is no nede to reherse it more,
 Howe that ye sawe her first, and where,
 But wolde ye tel me the manere 1130
 To her whiche was your firste speche,
 Therof I woldè you besече,
 And howe that she knewe first your thought,
 Whethir ye lovid her or nought,
 And telleth me eke what ye have lore; 1135
 I herde you tellin here before,
 Ye saide thou n'otist what thou menest,
 For I have losse more than thou weneist?
 And what losse is that? (quod I tho;)
 N'il she not love you? is it so? 1140
 Or havin ye ought done amis,
 That she hath lese you? is it this?
 For Godd'is love tellith me al.
 Before God (quod he) and I shal.
 I say right as I have ysaide, 1145
 On her was al my love ylaide,
 And yet she n'iste it ner a dele
 Not longè tyme, levith it wele,
 For be right fykir I durst nought
 For al this worlde tel her my thought, 1150
 Ne' I wolde have wrathid her trewly;
 For wost thou why? she was lady
 Of the body that had the herte,
 And whofo' hath that may not avertere.

But for to kepe me fro' ydlenesse 1155
 Trewly I dyd my busynesse
 To make songis as I best coude,
 And oftin time I songe 'hem loude,
 And made songis this a grete dele,
 Although I coude nat make so wele 1160
 Songis, ne knewe the arte so al,
 As coude Lamek'is sone Tubal,
 That founde out first the arte of songe,
 For as his brothir's hamirs ronge
 Upon his anvelt up and downe 1165
 Therof he toke the firste sowne.

But Grekes saine of Pythagoras
 That he the first findir ywas
 Of the' arte, Aurora tellith so;
 But therof no force of 'hem two; 1170
 Algatis songis thus I made
 Of my felyng, min herte to glade,
 And so! this was the althir first,
 In'ot whethir it were the werst:

Lorde! it makith min hertè light 1175
 Whan that I thinke on that swete wight
 That is so semely on to se,
 And wishe to God it might so be
 That she wolde holde me for her knight,
 My lady, that' is so faire and bright. 1180

Nowe have I tolde the, soth to say,
 My firste songe. Upon a day

I bethought me what mochil wo
 And forowe that I suffrid tho
 For her, and yet she wiste it nought; 1185
 Ne tel her durst I not my thought:
 Alas! thaught I, I can no rede,
 And but I tel her I am but dede,
 And if I tel her, to say sothe,
 I am adradde she wol be wrothe: 1190
 Alas! what shal I than ydo?
 In this debate I was so wo
 Me thought myne hertè braft atwaine,
 So at the laste, sothe for to faine,
 I bethought me that Dame Nature 1195
 Ne formid nevir in cature
 So mochil beaute trewily
 And bountie withoutin mercy.
 In hope of that my tale I tolde
 With forowe, as that I ner sholde 1200
 For nedis, and maugre myne hed
 I must have tolde her or be ded.
 I n'ot wel howe that I began,
 Ful yvil reherce it I can,
 And eke, as helpe me God withal, 1205
 I trowe it was in the dismal,
 That was the ten woundes of Egypte,
 For many' a worde I ovirskipte
 In telling my tale, for pure fere
 Lest that my wordis mysseset were; 1210

With sorowful hert and woundes dede,
 Softely, and quaking for pure drede
 And shame, and flinting in my tale
 For ferde, and min hewe allè pale;
 Ful ofte I wexte bothe pale and red, 1215
 Bowing to her I hinge the hed;
 I durst not onis loke her on,
 For wit, manir, and al, was gone;
 I saide, Mercy, swete! and no more:
 It n'as no game; it fate me fore. 1220

So at the laste, the sothe to saine,
 Whan that myne herte was come againe,
 To tellin shortly al my speche,
 With whole herte I gan her beseche
 That she wolde be my lady swete, 1225
 And swore and hertely gan her hete
 Evir to be stedfaste and trewe,
 And love her alway freshly newe,
 And nevir othir lady have,
 And all her worship for to save 1230
 As I beste coude, I swere her this,
 For yours is al that er ther is,
 For evirmore, myne hertè swete!
 And ner to false you but I mete
 In'yl, as wise God helpe me so. 1235

And whan I had my tale ydo
 God wote she' acomptid not a stre
 Of al my tale, so thoughtin me:

To tel shortly, right as it is,
 Trewly her answere it was this; 1240
 I can not nowe wel countrefete
 Her wordis, but this was the grete
 Of her answere: she sayid Nay
 Al utterly. Alas that day
 'The sorowe' I suffrid and the wo! 1245
 That trewly Cassandra, that so
 Bewaylid the distruccion
 Of Troyè and of ilion
 Had ner soche sorowe as I tho;
 I durstin no more say therto 1250
 For pure fere, but yfale away,
 And thus I lyved ful many'a day,
 That trewily I had no nede
 Ferthir than at my bedd'is hede
 Nevir a day to sechin sorowe, 1255
 I founde it redy every morowe;
 For why? I loved her in no gere.

So it befell an othir yere
 I thought onis I wouldin fonde
 To doe her knowe and undirstonde 1260
 My wo; and she well undirstode
 That I ne wilnid thyng but gode
 And worship, and to kepe her name
 Ovir all thynges, and drede her shame,
 And was so busie her to servè, 1265
 And pitie were I shouldin sterve,

Sithe that I wilned none harme iwis.

1240 So when my ladie knewe all this,
My ladie yave me all whollie
The noble yest of her mercie,
Savyng her worship by al waies;
1245 Dredelesse I mene none othir waies,
And therewith she yave me a ryng,
I trowe it was the firste thyng:
But if myne hertè was iwaxe
1275 Glad that it is no nede to axe.

As helpe me God I was as blive
1250 Yraifid as fro deth to live,
Of all happis the aldirbest,
The gladdist and the moste at rest,
1255 For truillie that swetè wight,
When I had wrong and she the right,
She wouldin alwaie so godelie
Foryeve me so debonairlie;
In all my youth, in allè chaunce,
1285 She toke me in her govirnaunce;
Therewith she was alwaie so true,
Our joye was evir iliche newe;
Our hertis werne so even a paire,
That nevir n'as that one contraire
1290 Unto that othir for no wo,
For sothe iliche thei suffrid tho.

1265 O blisse, and eke o forowe bothe!
Iliche thei were bothe glad and wrothe.

All was us one withoutin were ; 1295
 And thus we lived full many' a yere
 So well I can not tellin how.

Sir, (quod I) and where is she now ?
 Now ! quod he, and yfinte anone,
 Therewith he woxe as dedde as stone, 1300
 And faied, Alas that I was bore!
 That was the losse that here before
 I tolde the that I had ylorne.

Bethinke the how I faied beforne
 Thou woste full lityl what thou menest,
 For I have losse more then thou wenest. 1305

God wot, alas ! right that was she.
 Alas, Sir ! how ? what maie that be ?
 She is dedde ! Naie ! Yes, by my trouthe.
 Is that your losse ? by God it' is routhe. 1310

And with that wordè right anone
 Thei gan to strake forthe ; all was done
 For that tymè the hart huntynge.

With that me thoughtin that this kyng
 Began homewardis for to ride 1315
 Unto a place was there beside,
 Whiche that was from us but a lite,
 A long castill with wallis white,
 By Sainct John, on a richè hill,
 As me mette ; but thus it befill : 1320

Right thus me mette, as I you tell,
 That in the castell there was a bell,

1295 As it had smittin houris twelve,
 And therewith I awoke my selve,
 And found me lying in my bedde, 1325
 And the boke whiche that I had redde
 Of Alcyone and Ceix the kyng,
 And of the goddis of Slepyng,
 I found it in myne hond ful evin;
 Thought I this is so queint a swevin 1330
 That I would by proceffe of tyme
 Fonde to put this swevin in rime
 As I can best, and that anon:
 This was was my swevin, now it' is doen. 1334

Explicit.

This seems an envoy to the Duke of Lancaster after his loss of Blanch.

1310 My master, &c. When of Christ our kyng
 Was askid, What is trothe or sothfastnesse,
 He not a worde answerde to that askyng,
 As who saieth, no manne is all true I gesse;
 1315 And therefore though I hight for to expresse
 The sorowe' and wo that is in mariage
 I dare not wrien of it no wickidnesse,
 Lest I my self fall eft in soche dotage. 3

1320 I will not saie how that it is the chaine
 Of Sathanas on whiche he knawith ever,
 But I dare saine were he out of his paine

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M

As by his will he would be boundin never;
 But thilkè dotid fole that eft hath lever
 Ichainid be than out of prisone crepe,
 God let hym nevir fro his woe discever,
 Ne no man hym bewailin though he wepe. 16

But yet lesse thou do worse takith a wife;
Bet is to wedde than brennin in worse wife:
 But thou shalt have sorowe on thy fleshe thy life,
 And ben thy wiv'is thralle, as saine these wife;
 And if that holy writte maie not suffise
 Experience shall the teche, so maie happe:
 Take the waie levir to be taken in Frise
 Then eft to fall of weddyng in the trappe. 24

This lityl writte, proverbis or figure,
 I sende you, takith kepe of it I rede;
Unwise is he that can no wele endure:
If thou be sitir put the not in drede
 The Wife of Bathe I praie you that ye rede
 Of this matter which that we have on honde:
 God grauntin you your life frely to lede
 In fredome, for soule is it to be bonde. 32

Explicit.

THE ASSEMBLE OF FOULES.

*All Fowles are gathered before Nature on St. Valentine's
Day to chuse their mates. A female eagle being beloved of
three terrels requireth a year's respite to make her choice,
upon this triall, Qui bien aime tard oublie, be that lov-
eth well is slow to forget.*

THE life so short, the craft so long to lerne,
The assaye so hard, so sharp the conquering,
The dredefull joy, alwaie that flit so yerne,
All this mene I by Love, that my felyng
Astonieth with his wondirfull werkyng
So fore iwis, that when I on him thinke
Naught wete I well whether I flete or sink. 7

For all be that I knowe not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quitith folke ther hire,
Yet happith me full ofte in bokis rede
Of his miraculis and his cruill ire,
There rede I well he woll be lorde and fire:
I dare not faie his strokis be so fore,
But God save soche a lorde! I can no more. 14

Of usage, what for lust and what for lore,
On bokis rede I oft, as I you tolde,
But wherfore that I speke all this, naught yore
Agon it happid me for to beholde
Upon a boke iwrite with lettirs old,
And thereupon a certain thing to lerne,
The longè daie full fast I radde and yerne; 21

M ij

For out of the olde feldis, as men saieth,
 Comith all this newe corne fro yere to yere,
 And out of oldè bokis, in gode saieth,
 Comith all this newe science that men lere :
 But now to purpose : as of this mattere
 'To redin forthe, it gan me so delite
 That all that daie me thought it but a lite.

28

This boke of whiche I makin mencion
 Entitlid was right thus, as I shall tell,
 Tullius of the Drame of Scipion;
 Chapters seven it had of heven and hell,
 And yerth, and foulis that therein do dwell,
 Of whiche, as shortly as I can it trete,
 Of this sentence I woll you faine the grete.

35

First tellith it when Scipion was come
 In Affrike how he metith Massinisse,
 That hym for joie in armis hath inome;
 Then tellith he her speche, and all the blisse
 That was betwixt 'hem til the daie gan misse,
 And how his auncester Affrikan so dere
 Gan in his slepe that night till hym appere :

42

Then tellith it that from a sterrie place
 How Affrikan hath hym Carthage yshewed,
 And warnid hym besorne of all his grace,
 And saied hym, What man, lerid eithir leude,
 That lovith common profite well itheude,
 He should into a blisfull place ywende,
 There as joye is that last withoutin ende :

49

Then askid he if folke that here ben dede
 Have life and dwellyng in an othir place?
 And Affrikan saied Ye, withoutin drede,
 And how our present worldly liv'is space
 N'is but a manir deth, what waie we trace,
 And rightfull folke shall gon aftir thei die
 To heven, and shewid hym the Galaxie: 56

Then shewed he him the little yerth that here is
 To regarde of the hevin's quantire,
 And after shewid he hym the nine speris,
 And aftir that the melodie herd he
 That comith of thilke speris thryis thre,
 That welles of musike ben and melodie
 In this worlde here and cause of harmonie: 63

Then saied he him, Scns that yerth was so lite,
 And full of tourment and of hardè grace,
 That he ne shuld hym in this worlde delite;
 Then tolde he him in certain yeris space
 That every sterre should come into his place
 There it was first, and all should out of mind
 That in this worlde is doen of all mankynd: 70

Then praied hym Scipion to tell hym all
 The waie to come into that hevin blisse;
 And he saied, First knowe thy self immortall,
 And loke aie busely that thou werche and wisse
 To common profite, and thou shalt not misse
 To come swiftly unto that placè dere
 That full of blisse is and of soulis clere. 77

And brekirs of the lawe, the sothe to faine,
 And likerous folke astir that thei ben dede,
 Shull whirle about the world alwaie in pain
 'Till many' a worlde be passid, out of drede,
 And then foryevin all ther wickid dede;
 Then shullin thei come to that blisfull place,
 To whiche to comin God sendin the grace.

84

The daie gan failin, and the darkè night,
 That revith beflis from ther businesse,
 Beraftè me my boke for lacke of light,
 And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
 Fulfilled of thought and busie hevinesse,
 For bothe I had thyng whiche that I ne wolde,
 And eke I ne had that thyng that I wolde.

91

But, finally, my spirite at the laste,
 For werie of my labour all that daie,
 Toke rest, that madin me to slepe faste,
 And in my slepe I met as that I laie
 How Affrikan, right in the self araie
 'That Scipion hym sawe before that tide,
 Was come, and stode right at my bedd'is side.

98

The werie huntir slepyng in his bedde
 The wodde ayen his minde goith anone,
 The judge ydremith how his ples be spedde,
 The cartir dremith how his cartis gone,
 The rich of gold, the knight fight with his sone,
 The sicke ymette he drinkith of the tonne,
 The lovir mette he hath his ladie wonne.

105

Can I not faine if that the cause ywere
 For I had radde of Affrikan beforne
 That madin me to mete that he stode there,
 But thus said he; Thou hast the so wel borne
 In lokyng of myne olde boke all to torne,
 Of whiche Macrobie ne raught not a lite,
 That somedele of thy labour would I quite. 112

Thou Citherea, blisfull ladie swete!
 That with thy sire brond dauntist when the lest,
 That madist me this swevin for to mete,
 Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best,
 As wisely as I feigh the north northwest
 When I began my swevin for to write,
 So yeve me might to rime it and endite. 119

This foresaid Affrikan me hent anone,
 And forthe with hym unto a gate ybrought
 Right of a parke ywallid with grene stone,
 And oer the gate with lettirs large ywrought
 There werin versis writtin, as me thought,
 On eithir halfe, of full grete difference,
 On which I shall you saie the plain sentence. 126

Through me men gon into that blisful place
 Of hertis hele and dedly woundis cure,
 Through me men gone into the well of grace,
 There grene and lustie Maie shall er endure;
 This is the waie to all gode avinture:
 Be glad, thou reder, and thy sorowe of cast,
 All open am I; passe in; and spede the fast. 133

Through me men gon, then spake that othir side,
 Unto the mortall strokis of the spere,
 Of whiche Disdain and Daungir is the gide,
 There nevir tre shall fruiēt ne levis bere;
 This streme you ledith to the sorowfull were
 There as the fishe in prison is all drie;
 The' eschewyng is onely the remedie.

140

These versis of gold and asure writte were,
 Of whiche I gan astonied to beholde,
 For with that one encrefid all my fere,
 And with that othir gan my herte to holde;
 That one me het, that othir did me colde:
 No wit had I for errour for to chese
 To entre' or flie, or me to save or lese.

147

Right as betwixtin adamantis two
 Of evin weight a pece of yron set
 Ne hath no might to movin to ne fro,
 For what that one maie hale that othir let;
 So fared I, that I n'ist where me was bet
 To entre' or leve, til Affrican my gide
 Me hent, and shove in at the gatis wide,

154

And saied, It standith writtin in thy face
 Thyne errour, though thou tell it not to me,
 But dred the not to come into this place,
 For this writyng is nothyng mente by the,
 Ne by none but he Lov'is servaunt be,
 For thou of love hast lost thy tast I gesse,
 As sicke man hath of swete and bittirnesse.

161

But nathèles, although that thou be dull,
 That which thou canst not doe yet maiest thou se,
 For many' a man that maie not stande a pull
 Yet liketh it hym at wrestlyng for to be,
 And demith whethir he doe bet or he;
 And if thou haddist connyng for t'endite
 I shall the shewin mattir of to write.

168

With that my hand in his he toke anon,
 Of whiche I comfort caught, and went in fast;
 But Lorde! so I was glad and well begon!
 For ovir all where I myne evin cast
 Were treis clad with leves that aie shal last,
 Eche in his kinde, with colour freshe and grene
 As emeraude, that joie it was to sene.

175

The bildir oke, and eke the hardie ashe,
 The pillir elme, the cossir unto caraine,
 The boxe pipetre, the holme to whippis lashe,
 The sailing firre, the cypres deth to plaine,
 The shotir ewe, the aspe for shaftis plaine,
 The' olive of pece, and eke the dronkin vine,
 The victor palme, the laurir to divine.

182

A gardein sawe I full of blofomed bowis
 Upon a rivir in a grenè mede
 There as fweteneffe evirmore inough is,
 With flouris white and blewe, yelow and rede,
 And colde and clere wellestremis nothyng dede,
 That swommin full of smale fisshis light,
 With finnis rede and scalis silvir bright.

189

On every bough the birdis herd I syng
 With voice of angell in ther harmonie,
 That busied 'hem ther birdis forthe to bryng,
 The little pretie conies to ther plaie gan hie,
 And furthir all about I gan espie
 The dredfull roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
 Squirils, and bestis small of gentle kind.

196

Of instrumentes of stringis in accorde
 Herd I so plaie a ravishyng swetnesse
 That God, that makir is of all and lorde,
 Ne herd nevir a bettir, as I gesse,
 Therewith a winde, unneth it might be lesse,
 Made in the levis grene a noisè soft
 Accordant to the Foulis song on lost.

203

The aire of the place so attempre was
 That ner was ther grevaunce of hot ne cold,
 There was eke every wholsome spice and gras,
 Ne no man maie there waxin like ne old;
 Yet was there morè joie a thousande fold
 Then I can tell, or evir could or might;
 There is evir clere daie and nevir night.

210

Undir a tre beside a well I seye
 Cupide our lorde his arrowes forge and file,
 And at his fete his bowe all redie laye,
 And well his doughtir temprid all the while
 The heddiss in the well, and with her wile
 She couchid 'hem aftir as thei should serve,
 Some for to flea, and some to wound and carve.

217

Tho was I ware of Plesance anon right,
 And of Arraie, Luste, Beaute', and Curtisie,
 And of the craft that can yhave the might
 To doen by force a wight to doen folie,
 Disfigurid was she, I will not lie,
 And by hymself, undir an oke I gesse,
 Sawe I Delite, that stode with Gentilnesse:

224

Then sawe I Beautie with a nice atire,
 And Youth, all full of game and jolite,
 Fole Hardinesse, Flattirie, and Desire,
 Messagerie, and Mede, and othir thre,
 Ther namis shall not here be tolde for me,
 And upon pillirs grete of jaspir long
 I sawe a temple' of brasse ifoundid strong:

231

And about the temple dauncid alwaie
 Women inow, of which some there ywere
 Faire of 'hemself, and some of 'hem were gaie;
 In kirtils all disheveled went thei there,
 That was ther office er fro yere to yere;
 And on the temple sawe I white and faire
 Of dovis sitt yng many' a thousande paire.

238

Before the temple dore full sobirlye
 Dame Pece yfat, a curtaine in her honde,
 And her besidis wondir discretlye
 Dame Pacience ysitt yng there I fonde,
 With facè pale, upon an hill of sonde,
 And alchir nexte, within and eke without,
 Behest and Arte, and of ther folke a rout.

245

Within the temple' of sighis hote as fire
 I herd a swough that gan about to ren,
 Whiche sighis were engendrid with desire
 That madin every hertè for to bren
 Of newè flambe; and well espied I then
 That all the cause of sorowes that thei drie
 Come of the bittir goddis Jelousie.

252

The god Priapus sawe I as I went
 Within the temple' in soveraine place ystonde
 In soche arraie as when the asse hym shent
 With crie by night, and with sceptre in honde;
 Full busilie men gan assaie and fonde
 Upon his hedde to set of fondrie hewe
 Garlandis full of freshe flouris newe:

259

And in a privie corner in disport
 Founde I Venus and her portir Richeffe,
 That was full noble' and hautin of her port;
 Darke was that place, but astirward lightnesse
 I sawe a lite, unnethes it might be lesse,
 And on a bed of golde she laie to reste
 Till that the hote sonne began to weste.

266

Her gildid heris with a goldin threde
 Iboundin were, untressid as she laie,
 And nakid from the brest unto the hede
 Men might her se, and, sothly for to saie,
 The remènaunt covired well to my paie
 Right with a lityl kerchese of Valence;
 There n'as no thickir clothe of no defence.

273

The placè gave a thoufande favours fote,
 And Bacchus, god of Wine, fate her befide,
 And Ceres next, that doeth of hunger bote,
 And, as I faied, amiddis laie Cypride,
 To whom on kneis the yong folkis cride

To be ther helpe: but thus I let her lie,
 And farthir in the temple I gan espie,

That in difpite of Diana the chaſte
 Full many a bowe ibroke hing on the wall
 Of maidins, foche as gone ther tymis waſte
 In her ſervice, and paintid ovir all
 Of many a ſtorie, of whiche I touchin ſhall
 A ſewe, as of Califfo and Atalante,

And many a maide of which the name I want,

Semiramis, Candace, and Hercules,
 Biblis, Dido, Thiſbe, and Pyramus,
 Triftram, Ifoude, Paris, and Achilles,
 Helaine, Cleopatra, and Troilus,
 Scylla, and eke the mother of Romulus;

All theſe were paintid on that othir ſide,

And all ther love, and in what plite thei dide.

When I was comen ayen into the place
 That I of ſpake, that was ſo fote and grene,
 Forthe walked I tho my ſelvin to ſolace,
 Tho was I ware where there yfate a quene,
 That as of light the ſommir ſonnè ſhene
 Paſſuth the ſterre, right ſo ovir meſure

She fairir was then any other creature.

And in a launde, upon a hill of floures,
 Was fet this quene, this noble goddesse Nature;
 Of braunchis were her hallis and her boures
 Iwrought after her craft and her mesure;
 Neither n'as Foule that cometh of engendrure
 That there ne were yprest in her presence
 To take her dome and yeve her audiance; 308

For this was on Sainct Valentin's daie,
 When every Foule comith to chese her make
 Of every kinde that men ythinkin maie,
 And that so huge a noise gan thei to make
 The yerth, the se, and tre, and every lake,
 So full was, that unnethis there was space
 For me to stande, so full was all the place. 315

And right as Alaine in The Plaint of Kinde
 Deviseeth Nature of soche araie and face,
 In soche araie men mightin her there finde.
 This noble empreffe, full of allè grace,
 Bad evèry Foule takin her owne place
 As thei were wont alwaie fro yere to yere
 On Sainct Valentines daie to standin there: 322

That is to saie, the Foulis of ravine
 Were highist fet, and then the Foulis smale,
 That etin as them Nature would encline,
 As worne or thing, of whiche I tell no tale,
 And watirfoule sate lowist in the dale,
 And Foules that liveth by fede fat on the grene,
 And that so fele that wondir was to sene. 329

There mightin men the roiall egle finde,
 That with his sharpe loke persith the son,
 And othir eglis of a lowir kinde,
 Of whiche that clerkis well devisin con;
 There was the tirant with his sethirs don
 And grene, I mene the goshaue, that doth pine
 To birdes for his outrageous ravine;

336

The gentle faucon, that with his fete distreineth
 The kyng's hand, the hardie sperhaue eke,
 The qual'is foe, the merlion, that peineth
 Hymself full oft, the larkè for to seke,
 There was the dove, with her eyin so meke,
 The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth,
 The oule eke, that of deth the bode ybringeth;

343

The crane, the geant, with his tromp'is sounne,
 The thief the chough, and eke the chattring pie,
 The scornynge jaie, the ele's foe the herounne,
 The false lapwing, alle full of trechirie,
 The starling, that the counsaile can bewrie,
 The tame ruddocke, and the cowarde kite,
 The cocke, that horiloge is of thropes lite;

350

The sparow, Venus son, the nightingale,
 That clepith forthe the freshe levis newe,
 The swalowe, murder of the beis smale,
 That maken honie of flouris freshe of hewe,
 The weddid turtell with his herte true,
 The pecocke with his angell sethirs bright,
 The sefaunt, scornir of the cocke by night;

357

Nij

The waker gose, the cuckowe, er unkinde,
 The poppingeit, full of delicafie,
 The drake, destroyir of his ownè kinde,
 The storke, the wrèkir of advoutèrie,
 The hote cormèraunt, full of glotonie,
 The ravin wise, the crowe, with voice of care,
 The throstill olde, and frostie feldèfare.

364

What should I saie? of Foules of every kind
 That in this worlde have fethirs and stature
 Men mightin in that place assemblid finde
 Before that noble goddesse of Nature,
 And eche of them ydid his busie cure
 Benignèlie to chese or for to take
 By her accorde his formell or his make.

371

But to the point. Nature held on her hond
 A formell egle', of shape the gentillest
 That evir she emong her workis fonde,
 The moste benigne and eke the godeliest;
 In her was every vertue at his rest
 So farforthe, that Nature her self had blisse
 To loke on her, and oft her becke to kisse.

378

Nature, the vicare of the' almightie Lorde,
 That hote and colde, hevie, light, moiste, and drie,
 Hath knit by evin nombir of accorde,
 In esie voice began to speke and saie,
 Foulis, take hede of my sentence I praie,
 And for your ese, in fordring of your nede,
 As fast as I maie speke I will me spede.

385

Ye know well how on S. Valentine's daie,
 By my statute and through my govirnaunce,
 Ye chese your makes, and aftir flie awaie
 With 'hem as I doe pricke you with plesaunce,
 But nathelesse, as by rightfull ordinaunce,
 Maie I not let, for all this worlde to win,
 But he that moste worthiest is shall begin.

392

The tercell egle, as ye knowe full wele,
 The Foule roiall, above you' all in degre,
 The wise and worthie, secret, true as stele,
 The whiche I have formid, as ye maie se,
 In every parte as it best likith me,
 It nedith not his shape you to devise,
 He shall first chese and spekin in his gise.

399

And after hym by ordir shall ye chese
 Aftir your kinde, everiche as you likith,
 And as your hap is shall ye win or lese,
 But which of you that love most entrikith
 God sende hym her that forest for hym sikith;
 And therewithall the tercell gan she call,
 And saied, My sonne, the choise is to the fall.

406

But nathelesse in this condicion
 Muste be the choice of everiche that is here,
 That she agre to his eleccion,
 Who so he be, that should yben her fere;
 This is our usage aye fro yere to yere,
 And who so maie at this time have his grace
 In blisfull tyme he came into this place.

413

N iij

With hed enclined and with full humble chere
 This roiall tercell spake, and taried nought,
 Unto my soveraine ladie', and not my fere,
 I chose and chese with will, and hert, and thought,
 The formell on your hand so well iwrought,
 Whose I am all, and evir will her serve,
 Doe what her luste to doe me live or sterve; 420

Besechyng her of mercie and of grace,
 As she that is my ladie soverain,
 Or let me die here present in this place,
 For certis long maie I not live in pain,
 For in my herte is corvin every vain,
 Havyng regarde onily to my trouthe :
 My dere herte! havith on my wo some routhe. 427

And if that I be founde to her untrue,
 Disobeisaut, or wilfull negligent,
 Avauntour, or in proesse love anewe,
 I praie to you this be my judgèment,
 That with these Foulis I be all to rent
 'That ilkè daie that she me evir finde
 To her untrue or in my gilte unkinde. 434

And sith none lovith her so well as I,
 Although she nevir of love me behet,
 Then ought she to be mine through her mercie,
 For othir bonde can I none on her knet,
 For for wele nor wo nevir shall I let
 To servin her, how far so that she wende:
 Saie what you list, my tale is at an ende. 441

Full right as the fote and freshe redde rose newe
 Against the sommir sunne ycoloured is,
 Right so for shame all waxin gan the hewe
 Of this formell when that she herd all this;
 Neithir she answerde well ne saied amis,
 So fore abashed was she, till that Nature
 Saied, Doughtir, drede you not, I you assure. 448

An othir tercell egle spake anon
 Of lowir kind, and saied that should not be;
 I love her bet then ye doe by Sainct John,
 Or at the lest I love as well as ye,
 And lengir have served her in my degre,
 And if she should have loved for long lovyng
 To me alone had be the guerdonyng. 458

I dare eke saie, if she me findin false,
 Unkinde, jangler, rebell, in any wise,
 Or jelous, doe me hangin by the halfe;
 And but I berin me in her servise
 As well aye as my wit can me suffice
 Fro poinct to poinct, her honour for to save,
 Take she my life and all the gode I have. 462

The thirde tercell egle answerid tho,
 Now, Sirs, ye se the lityl lesir here,
 For every Foule crieth out to be ago
 Forthe with his make or with his lady dere,
 And eke Nature her self ne will not here,
 For tarying her, not half that I would seie,
 And but I speke I must for sorowe deie. 469

Of longe service avaunt I me nothing,
 But as possible' is me to die to day
 For wo as he that hath be languishing
 This twenty wintre', and wel it happin may
 A man may serve bettir and more to pay
 In halfe a yere, although it were no more,
 Than some man doth that hath servid ful yore. 476

I say not this by me, for I ne can
 Do no servise that may my lady plesse,
 But I dare say I am her trewist man,
 As to my dome, and fainist wolde her plesse:
 At shortè wordis, til that dethe me cese
 I wil be hers whethir I wake or winke,
 And trewe in al that hertè may bethinke. 483

Of al my lyfe syth that day I was borne
 So gentle ple in love or othir thinge
 Ne herdin nevir no man me beforne,
 Who so that had right lesir and conninge
 For to reherse ther chere and ther spekyng,
 And from the morowe gan this spechè laste
 Till downward went the sonnè wondir faste. 490

The noise of Foulis for to be deliverde
 So loudè range, Have don and let us wende,
 That wel wende I the wode had all to shiverd:
 Come of, they cried; alas! ye wil us shende;
 Whan shal your cursid pleding have an ende?
 How shulde a judge on eithir partie leve
 For ye or nay withoutin any preve? 497

The gose, the cuckowe, and the ducke also,
 So cryid Keke, keke, Cuckow, Queke, queke, hye,
 Thorough myne cris the noyse wente tho;
 The gose sayd than, Al this n'ys worthe a flye,
 But I can shape herof a remedye,
 And wil ysay my verdite faire and swithe
 For watir Foule, who so be wrothe or blithe. 504

And I for worme Foule, said the sole cuckow,
 For I wil of min owne autorite,
 For common spede, take on me the charge now
 For to deliver us is grete charite,
 Ye may abydin a while yet perde.

(Quod the turtel) If that it be your wil
 A wight may speke it were as gode be stil. 511

I am a fede Foule, one the unworthiest,
 That wote I wel, and the lest of connynge,
 But bettir is that a wight's tonge rest
 Than entremetin him of soche doynge
 Of whiche he neithir redin can nor singe,
 And who so' it doth ful foule him self acloyeth,
 For *Office uncommittid ofte anoyetb.* 518

Nature, whiche that alway yhad an ere
 To murmure of the leudeness behinde,
 With faconde voice said, Hold your tongis there,
 And I shal sone I hope a counsaile finde
 You to deliver and fro this noyse unbynde:
 I charge of every flocke ye shall one cal
 To say the verdite of you Foulis all. 525

Assentid were to this conclusyon
 The birdis al, and Foulis of ravine
 Have chofin first by plaine election,
 The tercelet of the faucon to define,
 Al ther sentence, and as him lust to termine,
 And to Nature him gan they to presente,
 And she acceptith him with glad entente.

534

The tercelet sayd than in this manere:
 Ful harde it were to preve it by reson
 Who lovith best this gentil formel here,
 For everiche hath soche replicacion
 That by skillis may non be brought adoun;
 I cannat se that argumentes availe,
 Than semith it there must be a bataille.

539

Al redy, quod these egles tercelles tho.
 Nay, Sirs, (quod he) if that I durst it say
 Ye do me wronge, my tale is not ydo;
 For, Sirs, ne takith nat a grese I pray,
 It may not be as ye wolde in this way;
 Ours is the voice that have the charge in hande,
 And to the judg'is dome ye muske ylande;

546

And therfore pece: I say as to my wit
 Me woldin thinke how that the worthiest
 Of knyghthode, and lengist had usid it,
 Most of estate, of blode the gentillest,
 Were fittingest for her, if that her lest,
 And of these thre she wote her selfe I trowe
 Whiche that he be, for it is light to knowe.

553

The watir Foulis have ther hedis laide
 Togidir, and of shorte avisèment,
 Whan evèriche had his verdite ysaide,
 They saidin sothely al by one assent
 Howe that the gose, with the facondè gent,
 That so desirith to pronounce our nede,
 534 Shal tel our tale, and prayed to God her spede. 560

And for these watir Foulis tho began
 The gose to speke, and in her cakelynge
 She said, Pece nowe, take kepe evèry man,
 And herken whiche a reson I shal forth bring;
 My witte is sharpe; I love no tarying;
 I say I rede him, tho he were my brother,
 539 But she wil love him let him love another. 567

Lo here a parsite reson of a gose!
 Tho (quod the sperhauke) nevir mote she the;
 Lo soche a thing it' is to have a tonge lose!
 Nowe parde sole yet were it bet for the
 Have holde thy pece than shewde thy nicete;
 Ic lyeth nat in his wit nor in his wil,
 546 But sothe is saide, *A sole can nat be still.* 574

The laughtir arofe of gentil Foulis al,
 And right anone the sede Foules chosin had
 The turtel trewe, and gan her to 'hem call,
 And prayid her to fay the sothè sad
 Of this matir, and askid what she rad?
 And she answered that plainly her entent
 553 She woldè shewe, and sothly what she ment. 581

Nay, God forbede a lovir shuldè chaunge,
 The turtel said, and wexte for shame al rede;
 Though that his lady evirmore be straunge,
 Yet let him serve her ay tyl he be dede;
 Forsothe I ne praise not the gos's rede,
 For tho she dyed I wold none othir make;
 I wil be hers tyl that the dethe me take.

588

Wel ybourdid (quod the ducke) by my hat;
 That men shouldin love alway causelesse
 Who can a reson finde or wit in that?
 Dauncith he mery that is mirthèlesse?
 Who shuldin recke of that is rechèlesse?
 Ye queke yet (quod the ducke) ful wel and faire,
There be mo sterres in the skye than a paire.

595

Nowe fye, churle! (quod the gentil tercèlet)
 Out of the donghil came that word aright;
 Thou canst not se which thinge is wel beset;
 Thou farest by love as owlis do by light,
 The day 'hem blindeth, ful wel they se by night;
 Thy kinde is of so lowe a wretchidnesse
 That what love is thou canst not se nor gesse.

602

Tho gan the cuckow put him forthe in prece
 For Foule that etith worme, and sayid blyve,
 So I (quod he) may have my make in pece
 I ne retche nought howe longè that ye strive;
 Let eche of 'hem be soleine al ther lyve:
 This is my rede, sens they may nat acorde;
 This shorte lesson nedith not recorde.

609

Ye, have the glutton filde inow his paunche,
 Then are we wel, sayid the emerlon,
 Thou murdrir of the heisugge, on the braunche,
 That brought the forth, thou most rufull glutton,
 Live thou solein, wormis corrupcion!
 For no force is of lacke of thy nature;
 Go, leude be thou while that the world may dure! 616

Nowe pece (quod Nature) I commaundin here,
 For I have herde al your opinion,
 And in effecte yet be we ner the nere;
 But, finally, this is my conclusion,
 That she her selfe shal have her election
 Of whom her list, who so be wroth or blithe,
 Him that she cheseth he shal her have as swithe: (23

For sithe it may not here discuslid be
 Who loveth her best, as said the tercèlet,
 Than wol I done this favour to' her, that she
 Shal have right him on whom her hert is set,
 And he her that his hert hath on her knet;
 This judge I Nature, for I may not lye,
 To none estate I have none othir eye. 630

But as for counsaile for to chose a make,
 Yf I were Reson, certis than woulde I
 Counsailin you the royal tercel take,
 As sayd the tercèlet ful skilfully,
 As for the gentilist and most worthy,
 Which I have wrought so wel to my plesance
 That to you it ought ben a suffisaunce. 637

With dredfull voice the formell her answerde;
 My rightfull lady, goddesse of Nature,
 Soth is that I am er undir your yerde,
 As is als' evèriche othir cature,
 And must be yours while that my life may dure,
 And therfore grauntith me my firstè bone,
 And myne entent you wol I say right sone. 644

I graunt it you (quod she.) And right anone
 This formel egle spake in this degre;
 Almighty quene! unto this yere be done
 I aske respite for to avylin me,
 And astir that to have my choyce all fre:
 This al and some that I wold speke and sey;
 Ye get no more although ye do me dey: 651

I wol not servin Venus ne Cupide
 Forsothe as yet by no manir of way.
 Nowe sens it may none othir wayes betide
 (Quod Dame Nature) here is no more to say;
 Than wolde I that these Foulis were away
 Eche with his make for tarying lengir here,
 And said 'hem thus, as ye shal astir here: 658

To you speke I, ye terceletis, (quod Nature)
 Beth of gode herte, and servith allè thre,
 A yere is not so longe for to endure,
 And eche of you paine him in his degre
 For to do wel, for God wote quit is she
 Fre you this yere, what astir so befall;
 This entremes is dressid for you all. 665

And whan this werk ybrought was to an ende
 To evèry Foule Nature yave his make
 By even acorde, and on ther way they wende,
 And Lorde the blisse and joye which that they make!
 For ech gan othir in his wingis take,

And with ther neckis eche gan othir winde,
 Thankynge aye the noble goddesse of Kinde. 672

But first were chesin Foulis for to singe,
 As yere by yere was alway ther usaunce,
 To singe a roundel at ther departing,
 To do to Nature honour and plesaunce;
 The note I trowe ymakid was in Fraunce;
 The wordis were soche as ye may here find
 The nextè vers, as I nowe have in minde, 679

Qui bien aime tard oublie.

Now welcom somir! with thy sonnis soft,
 That haste this wintir wethirs ovirshake;
 Saint Valentine! thou arte full hye on losse,
 Which drivist away the longe nightis blake,
 Thus singin smale Foulis for thy sake;
 Well havin they cause for to gladin oste
 Sens eche of 'hem recovered hath his make,
 Ful blisful maie they sing when they awake. 687

And with the shouting when ther songe was do
 That the Foulis made at ther flight away
 I woke, and othir bokis toke me to
 To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;
 I hope ywis to redin so some day
 That I shal metin some thinge for to fare
 The bet, and thus to rede I n'il not spare. 694

Explicit.

OF THE
CUCKOWE & THE NIGHTINGALE.

Chaucer dreameth that he beareth the Cuckow and the Nightingale contend for excellency in singing.

THE god of Love, ah, *benedicite* !
Howe mighty and howe grst a lorde is he !
For he can makin of lowe hertis hie,
And of hye lowe and lykè for to die,
And hardè hertis he can makin fre :

5

He can makin within a litil flounde
Of sickè folkè whole, and freshe, and founde,
And of the whole he can ymakè seke ;
He can ybindin and unbindin eke
That he wol have yboundin or unbounde.

10

To tel his might my wit may not suffise,
For he can makin of wise folke fui nice,
For he may do al that he wol device,
And lithy folkè to distroyin vice,
And proudè hertis he can make agrise.

15

Shortly, al that evir he wol he may ;
Against him there dare no wight say naye,
For he can glad and greve whom him lykith,
And who that he wol he loweth or sikith,
And most his might he shedith er in May ;

20

For evèry true gentle hertè fre,
 That with him is or thinkith for to be,
 Against May nowè shal have some sterenge,
 Or to joye or ellis to some mourning,
 In no sèson so moche, as thinkith me: 25

For whan that they may here the birdis singe,
 And se the flouris and the levis springe,
 That bringith into ther remembèraunce
 A manir ese ymedlid with grevaunce,
 And lusty thoughtis ful of grete longing; 30

And of that longing comith hevinesse,
 And therof growith oft grete sikènesse,
 And for the lacke of that that they desire;
 And thus in May ben hertis set on fire,
 So that they brennin forth in gret distresse. 35

I speke this of fèling trewily:
 What! tho that I be olde and unlusty
 Yet I have fèlte of the sickenesse through May
 Bothe hote and cold, and axis every day,
 How fore iwis there wote no wight but I. 40

I am so shakin with the fevirs white
 Of al this May ne slepe I but a lite;
 And also it is not lyke unto me
 That any hertè shouldin slepy be
 In whom that Love his fry darte wol smite. 45

O iij

362 THE CUCKOWE AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

But as I lay this othir night waking
 I thought howe lovirs had a tekining,
 And amonge 'hem it was a commune tale
 That it were gode to here the Nightingale
 Moche rathir than the leudè Cuckowe singe. 50

And than I thought anon as it was day
 I woldè faine go somewhere to affay
 If that I might a Nightingale yhere,
 For yet had I none herde of al that yere,
 And it was tho the thirdè night of May. 55

And right anon as I the day aspide
 No lengir would I in my bedde abide,
 But unto a wodde that was me fast by
 I went forthe my self alone boldily,
 And helde the way downe by a brokè side 60

Tyl I came to a launde of white and grene,
 So faire an one had I nevir in bene;
 The grounde was grene, ypoudrid with daisye,
 The flouris and the grevis alike hie,
 Al grene and white, was nothing ellis sene. 65

There fate I downe among the faire flouris,
 And sawe the birdes trippe out of ther bowris
 There as they restid 'hem had al the night;
 They were so joyful of the day's lyght
 They began of Maye for to done honouris: 70

They coudin wel that service al by rote,
 And there was many a full lovely note;
 Some songin loudè as they had yplained,
 And some in othir manir voice yfained,
 50 And some songin al out with the ful throte. 75

They proynid 'hem and madin 'hem right gay,
 And daunfidin and leptin on the spray,
 And evirmore were two and two in fere,
 Right so as they had chosin 'hem to yere
 55 In Feverere on Saint Valentine's day. 80

And the rivir whiche that I sat upon
 It madin soche a noisè as it ron,
 Accordaunt with the birdis armony,
 Me thought that it was the best melody
 60 That mightin ben yherde of any mon. 85

And for delyte, I ne wotte nevir howe,
 I fel in soche a flombre and a swowe,
 Nat al aslepe ne fully awaking,
 And in that swowe me thought I herdè singe
 65 The sory birde, I mene the leude Cuckowe, 90

And that was upon a tre right fast by;
 But who was than evil apaide but I?
 Now God (quod I) that dyid on the crois
 Yeve sorowe on the and on thy leude vois!
 70 Ful litil joye have I now of thy crie. 95

164 THE CUCKOWE AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

And as I with the Cuckow thus gan chide
 I herdin in the nextè bush beside
 A Nyghtingale so lustily yfinge
 'That with her clerè voice she madin ringe,
 Ecchoing thorough al the grene wode wide. 100

Ah! gode swete Nightingale! (quod I) then,
 A litil hast thou ben to longè hen,
 For here hath ben the leude sory Cuckow,
 And songin songis rathir than hast thou;
 I pray to God that evil fire her bren! 105

But now I wol you tel a wondre thing;
 As longe as I ylay in that swounning
 Me thought I wist what that the birdis ment,
 And what they sayd, and what was ther entent,
 And of ther speche I had full gode knowing. 110

There herdin I the Nightingale yfay,
 Now, gode Cuckow! goith some where awaye,
 And let us that can singin dwellin here,
 For every wight eschevith the to here,
 Thy songis ben so elenge, in gode fay. 115

What, (quod she) what may the aylin as nowe?
 It thinkith me I finge as wel as thou,
 For my songè is both true and eke plaine,
 And though I can not crakil so in vaine
 As thou dost in thy throte, I wet ner how. 120

THE CUCKOWE AND THE NIGHTINGALE. 165

And every wight may undirstandin me;
 But, Nightingale, so may they not done the,
 For thou hast many a nice queintè crie;
 I have the herdè faine Ocy, ocy:
 Howe might I knowin what that should ybe? 125

Ah, sole! (quod she) wost thou not what it is?
 Whan that I say Ocy, ocy, ywys
 Than menin I that I would wondre faine
 That al they werin shamfully yflaine
 That menin ought againist love amis; 130

And also' I would that al tho had the dede
 That thinkin not in love ther life to lede,
 For who so wol not the god of Love serve
 I dare wel say he is worthy to sterve,
 And for that stil Ocy, ocy, I grede. 135

Eye! (quod the Cuckow) this is a qucint lawe,
 That every wight shal love or be to draw;
 But I forsakin al soche company,
 For myne entent ne is not for to die.
 Ne ner while I live on Love's yoke to draw; 140

For lovirs ben the folke that ben on lyve
 That most disese yhave and most unthrive,
 And most endurin sorow, wo, and care,
 And that the lest yfelin of welfare;
 What nedith it ayenist trowth to strive? 145

166 THE CUCKOWE AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

What! (quod she) thou art alle out of thy minde;
 How might thou in thy churlinesse yfynde
 To speke of Lov's servauntes in this wise?
 For in this world is none so gode service
 To every wight that gentle is of kinde; 150

For therof truly comith al godenesse,
 Therof al honour and al gentilnesse,
 Thereof worship, ese, and al hert's lust,
 And parfite joye and ful assurid trust,
 And jolytie, and plesaunce, and freshenesse, 155

And lowlyhed, largeffe, and curtisye,
 And semelyhed, and trew company,
 And drede of shamè for to done amys,
 For he that truly Lov's servaunt is
 Were lothir to be shamid than to die. 160

And that thys is the sothe whiche that I sey
 In that beleve I wil bothe live and dey;
 And, Cuckow, so I rede thou do ywys.
 Than (quod he) let me nevir havin blisse
 Yf evir I to that counsaile obey. 165

Nyghtingale, thou yspekist wondre faire,
 But for al that is the soth contrayre,
 For Love ne is in yongè folke but rage,
 And is in oldè folke a grete dotage;
 Who most it usith he most shal enpaire; 170

For therof commeth difese and hevinesse,
 So sorow', and care, and many'a grete likenesse,
 Despite, debate, and angre, and envy,
 Depraving, shame, untrust, and jelousie,
 Pride, mischefe, povertie, and wodènesse. 175

Loving is aye an office of dispaire,
 And one thing is therin that is not faire,
 For who that getteth of Love a litil blisse,
 But if he be alwaie therewith, iwis
 He maie full sone of age yhave his haire : 180

And, Nightingalè, therefore hold the nie,
 For leve me well, for all thy queintè crie,
 If thou be ferre or longè fro thy make
 Thou shalt be as othir that ben forsake,
 And then thou shalt yhotin as do I. 185

Fie! (quod she) on thy namè and on the,
 The god of Love ne let the nevir the,
 For thou art worse a thousandfolde than wode,
 For many' one is full worthie and full gode
 That had be naught ne haddin Love ibee; 190

For evirmore Love his servauntes amendeth,
 And from all evill tachis 'hem defendeth,
 And makith 'hem to brenne right in a fire
 In trouthè and in worshipfull desire,
 And when him likith joy inough 'hem fendeth. 195

Thou, Nightingalè, he sayid, be still,
 For Love have no reson but it is will,
 For oft tymis untrue folke he esith
 And true folke so bittirly displefith
 That for defaute of courage he let 'hem spill. 200

Then toke i of the Nightingalè kepe
 How that she cast a figh out of her depe,
 And saied, Alas that evir I was bore!
 I can for tene not saie one wordè more;
 And right with that worde she braist out to wepe. 205

Alas! (quod she) my hertè woll to breke,
 To herin thus this leudè birdè speke
 Of Love, and of his worshipfull service;
 Now god of Love, thou helpe me in some wise
 That I maie on this Cuckowe ben awreke. 210

Me thoughtin then that he sterte up anon,
 And glad was I tho that he was agon,
 And evirmore the Cuckowe as he flaie
 Ysayid, Farewell, farewell, popingaie,
 As though he had yscornid me alone. 215

And then ycame the Nightingale to me,
 And sayid, Frende, forsoth I thankè the
 That thou hast likid me for to rescowe,
 And one avowe to Love ymake I now,
 That all this Maie I woll thy singir be. 220

I thankid her, and was right well apaied.

Ye, (quod she) and ne be thou not dismaied
Tho thou have herd the Cuckow erst than me,
For if I live it shall amendid be

The nextè Maie, if I be not affraied. 225

And one thing I woll redin the also,
Ne leue thou not the Cuckow ne' his loves so,
For all that he hath saied is strong lesyng.

Naie, (quod I) thereto shall nothing me bryng
For love, and it hath do me mochil wo. 230

Ye, hath it? Use (quod she) this medicine,
Every daie this Maie or that thou dine
Go lokin upon the freshe daisie,
And though thou be for woe in poinct to die
That shall full gretly lessen the of thy pine. 235

And loke alwaie that thou be gode and true,
And I woll sing one of the songis newe
For love of the, as londe as I maie crie;
And then she began this songè full hie,
I shrewe all 'hem that ben of love untrue. 240

And when she had ysong it to the ende,
Now farewell, (quod she) for I motè wende,
And god of Love, that can right well and may,
As mochil joyè fendè the this daie
As any yet lovir he evir fende, 245

Thus taketh the Nightingale her leue of me,
 I praie to God alwaie with her to be,
 And joye of love he sende her evirmore,
 And shilde us fro the Cuckowe and his lore!
 For there is not so false a birde as he.

250

Forthe she yflew the gentill Nightingale
 To all the birdis that were in that dale,
 And gate 'hem all into a place in fere,
 And besoughtin 'hem that they wouldin here
 Her disefe; and thus she began her tale:

255

The Cuckowe, well it is not for to hide
 How the Cuckowe and I fast havin chide
 Evir sithin that it ywas daie light;
 I praie you all that ye doin me right
 Of that foule, and false, and unkindè, bride.

260

Then speke o birde for all by one assent;
 'This mattir askith gode avisement,
 For we ben allè birdis here in fere,
 And sothe it is the Cuckowe is not here,
 And therefore we woll have a parliment;

265

And thereat shall the egle be our lorde,
 And othir peris that ben of recorde,
 And the Cuckowe shall be astir ysent,
 And there shall be yevin the judgèment,
 Or els we shall finally make accorde,

270

And this shall be ydone withoutin naie
 The morowe aftir Sainct Valentine's daie
 Undir a maple that is faire and grene
 Before the chambir windowe of the quene
 At Wodestbocke upon the grenè laie.

250 275

She thankid 'hem, and then her levè toke,
 And flew into an hauthorne by that broke,
 And there she fate and song upon that tre,
 For terme of life love hath withholdè me,
 So loudè, that I with that song awoke.

255 280

Explicit.

O leudè boke! with thy foule rudenessse,
 Sithe thou hast neithir beaute ne' eloquence
 Who hath the caused or yeve the hardinessse
 For to appere in my ladie's presence?
 I'am ful sikir thou knowest her benevo'lence,
 Full agreable to all her abiyng,
 For of all gode she is the best livyng.

260 287

Alas! that thou ne haddist worthinessse
 To shewin to her some plefaunt sentence,
 Sith that she hath thorough her gentillesse
 Acceptid the servaunt to' her digne reve'rence.
 O! me repentith that I ne' had science
 And leisir als to make the more florishyng,
 For of all gode she is the best livyng.

265 294

270

P ij

Beseche her mekely with all lowlinesse,
 Though that I be ferre from her in absence,
 To thinke on my trowth to' her and stedfastnesse,
 And to' abridge of my sorowes the vio'lence
 Which caused is, wherof knowith your sapience,
 She like emong to notifie me' her liking,
 For of all gode she is the best living.

301

L' ENVOYE.

Aurore of gladnesse, daie of lustinesse,
 Lucerne anight with hevenlie influence
 Illumined, rote of beautie and godenesse,
 Suspiris, whiche I effunde in silence,
 Of grace I beseche aledge let your writyng,
 Now of all gode sith ye be best livyng.

307

Explicit.

HEREAFTER FOLOWETH

HOW PYTE IS DEDE

AND BURIED IN GENTYLE HERTE.

Pyte, that I have fought so yore ago
 With hertè sore, and full of besy paine,
 That in this worlde was never wight so wo
 Withoutin dethe, and yf I shal nat faine
 My purpose was to Pite to complaine
 Upon the crueltie and tyrannye
 Of Love, that for my trowth doth me to die,

7

And whan that I by length of certaine yeres
 Had evir in one fought a time to speke,
 To Pite ran I all bespreint with teres
 To prayin her on Cruelte me' a-wreke;
 But or I might with any worde out breke,
 Or tel her any of my painis smerte,
 I found her ded and buried in an herte.

14

A downe I fel whan that I saw the herse
 Ded as a stone while that the swonne me laste,
 But up I rose with coloure ful diverse,
 And pitoufly on her myne eyen I cast,
 And nerir the corse I gañ presin fast,
 And for the soule I shope me for to pray;
 I was but lorne; there was no more to say.

21

Thus am I slaine sith that Pite is ded;
 Alas that day that evir it shulde fal!
 What manir man dare nowe hold up his hed,
 To whom shal now any foro'wfull hert call,
 Nowe Cruelte hath cast to fle us al,
 In ydle hope folke redèlesse of paine,
 Sith she is ded, to whom shal we complaine?

28

But yet encrefith me this wondir newe,
 That no wight wote that she is ded but I,
 So many men as in her tyme her knewe,
 And yet she dyid all so sodainly,
 For I have fought her er full besily
 Sithins that I had firstè witte or mind,
 But she was ded er that I coude her find.

35

Aboute her herse there stodin lustily,
 Withoutin any mo as thoughtin me,
 Bountie, perfetely well armed and richely,
 And freshe Beaute, and Lust, and Jolite,
 Assurid Manir, Youthe, and Honeste,
 Wisdome, Estate, with Drede and Governauce,
 Confedrid both by bonde and aliaunce.

42

A complainte had I writin in my honde
 To have yput to Pyte as a byl,
 But I there al this company ysonde
 That rathir wouldin all my causè spill
 Then do me help, I held my plaintè still,
 For to those folke withoutin any faile
 Without Pite there maie no bill availe.

49

Then leave all vertues save onely Pitie,
 Keping the corse, as ye have herd me saine,
 Confedrid by bonde unto Crueltie,
 And be assentid when I shall be flaine,
 And I have put my compleinte up againe,
 For to my foes my bill I dare not shewe
 The' effect, which sayith thus in wordis fewe :

56

Humblist of herte, hyist of reverence,
 Flowir benigne, coroune of vertues alle!
 Shewith unto your roiall excellence
 Your servaunt, if I durstin me so call,
 His mortall harme in which he is ifall,
 And nought all onely for his wofull fare
 But for your renome, as he shall declare.

63

It standeth thus; that your contary' Crueltie
 Allyid is ayenst your regalie,
 Undir colour of womanly beautie,
 For men shouldin not knowe her tyrannie,
 With Bountie, Gentilleffe, and Curtesie,
 And hath deprivid you thus of your place,
 That is hie Beaute', apertenant to your grace: 70

For kindly by your heritage and right
 Ye be annexid evir to Bountie,
 And verily ye ought to doe your might
 To helpin Frouthe in his adversitie;
 Ye be also the coroune of Beautie,
 And certis if that ye want in these twaine
 The worlde is lore; there is no more to faine. 77

Eke what availeth manir and gentilleffe
 Withoutin you, o most benigne creture!
 Shall Crueltie ybe your governeffe?
 Alas! what hertè maie it long endure?
 Wherefore but ye rathir ytakin cure
 To brekin that perillous aliaunce
 Ye fleen 'hem that ben in your obeisaunce. 84

And furthir ovir, if ye suffir this
 All your renome is fordoe in a throwe,
 There shall no man ywete what pitie is;
 Alas that your renome is fall so lowe!
 Ye be' also fro your heritage ithrowe
 By Crueltie, that occupieth your place,
 And we dispairid that fekin your grace. 91

Have merceie on me, thou herenus quene,
 That you have sought so tendirly and fore,
 O let some streame of light on me be sene,
 That love and drede you er longir the more!
 For, sothily to faine, I bere so fore;
 And though I be not connyng for to plaine
 For God's love have mēcie on my paine.

98

My paine is this, that what so I desire
 That have I not, ne nothyng like thereto,
 And evir setteth desire mine herte on fire;
 Eke on that othir side, where that I go
 What manir thing that may encrese my wo
 That have I redy unfought every where;
 Me lackith but my deth and then my bere.

105

What nedith to shewe percel of my paine,
 Sith every wo that herte maie bethinke
 I suffir, and yet dare not to you plaine?
 For well I wote though that I wake or winke
 Ye recke not whethir that I flete or sinke;
 And nathelesse yet my trouth I shall susteine
 Unto my deth, and that shall well be sene:

112

This is to faine, that I will be yours ever,
 Though ye me flea by Crueltie your so,
 Algate my spirite shall nevir discevir
 Fro your service for any paine or wo,
 Sith ye be dedde, alas that it is so!
 Thus for your deth I maie wepin and plain
 With hertè fore and full of belie pain.

119

Explicit.

*These Verses next folowing were compiled by G. Chaucer,
and in the written copies folowe at the ende of The Com-
plainte of Pite.*

98 THE longè nyghtis, when every cature
Should have ther rest in somewhat as by kind,
Or ellis ne may ther life not longe endure,
It fallith moste into my woful minde
How I so farre have brought my self behind,
That safe the deth ther may nothing me lisse,
So dispairid I am from allè blisse.

7

105 This same thought me lastith til the morow,
And from the morowe forth til it be eve;
There nedith me no care for to borow,
For both I have gode laisir and gode leve;
There is no wight that will my wo byreve,
To wepe enough and wailin all my fyll;
The forè sparke of peine now doth me spil.

14

112 This Love, that hath me set in soche a place
That my desire he wil nevir fulfyl,
For neithir Pite, Mercy, neithir Grace,
Can I not find, and yet my wofull herte
For to be dede I can it not arace,
The more I love the more she doth me smerte,
Thorowe whiche I fe withoute remedie
119 That from the deth I may no wise avertere.

22

Now sothly what she hight I wol reherse;
 Her name is Bountie, set in womanhed,
 Sadnes in youth, and beautie pridèlesse,
 And plesaunce undir govirnaunce and drede,
 And her surname is eke faire Ruthèlesse,
 The wisè knit unto gode avinture,
 That for I love her she sleth me giltlesse;
 Her love I best, and shall while I may dure:

30

Bett than my selfe a hundrid thousand dele,
 Than al this world'is richis or cature;
 Now hath not Love me bestowid wel,
 To lovin there I nevir shal have parte?
 Alas, right thus is turnid me the whele!
 Thus am I flaine with Lov'is furious darte:
 I can but love her best my swetè so,
 Love hath me taught no morè of his arte
 But servin alwaye and stint for no wo.

39

Within my trewè carefull herte ther is
 So mochil wo and eke so litil blisse
 That wo is me that evir I was bore!
 For al that thinge which I desire I misse,
 And al that evir I wolde not iwis
 That finde I redy to me evirmore;
 And of all this I n'ot to whom me plaine,
 For she that might me out of this ybring
 Ne rechith nought whethir I wepe or sing,
 So litil routh hath she upon my paine!

49

30 Alas! whan slepinge tyme is then I wake,
 Whan I shuld daunce for fere lo than I quake;
 This hevy life I lede, lo! for your sake,
 Though ye therof in no wise hedè take,
 Myn hert'is lady and whole my live's quene!
 For truly durst I say as that I fele
 Me semith that your swetè herte of stele
 Is whettid now againist me to kene.

57

39 My derè herte and best beloved so!
 Why lykith you to do me al this wo?
 What have I don that grevith you or faide?
 But for I serve and love you and no mo,
 And whilest I live I wil evir do so,
 And therefore, swete! ne bethe not il apaide;
 For so gode and so faire as that ye be
 It wer a right gret wondir but ye had
 Of al servauntis both of gode and badde,
 And best worthy of al them I am he.

67

49 But nevir the lesse, my righte lady swete!
 Though that I be unkonninge and unmete
 To serve as I coud best aye your highnes,
 Yet is ther none fainir, that would I hete,
 Than I to do you ese or ellis bete,
 What so I wilst that were to your highnes;
 And had I might as gode as I have wil,

Than shuld ye fele wher it were so or none,
 For in this world livinge than is ther none
 That fainir wolde your hert'is wil fulfil.

77

For both I love and eke drede you so fore,
 And algates mote and have don you ful yore,
 That bettir loved is non ne nevir shal,
 And yet I would beseeche you of no more
 But lovith wel, and be not wroth therfore,
 And let me serve you forth, lo! this is al;
 For I am nought so hardy ne so wode
 For to desire that ye should lovin me,
 For wel I wotte, alas! that may not be,
 I am so litil worthy' and ye so gode,
 For ye be one the worthyist on live,
 And I the most unlikely for to thrive.

89

Yet for al this wetith ye full righte wel
 That ye ne should me from your servyce drive,
 That I ne wil aye with my witis five
 Serve you truly what wo so that I fele,
 For I am set so hy upon your whele
 That though ye nevir wil upon me rewe
 I must you love, and bene evir as trewe
 As any man ycan or maye on live.

97

But the more that I love you, godely fre!
 The lassie finde I that ye lovin me:

77 Alas! whan shal that hardè wit amende?
 Wher is now al your womanly pite,
 Your gentilnes and your debonairte?
 Wil ye nothings therof upon me spend,
 And so whole, swete! as I am youris all,
 And so grete wil as I have to you serve?
 Now certis and ye let me thus ysterve
 Yet have ye wonnin therupon but small,

107

89 For at my knowing I do nothing why:
 And thus I wil besече you hertily,
 That if evir ye finde whilis ye live
 A truir servaunte to you than am I
 Levith than, and fleith me hardily,
 And I my deth to you wil al forgive;
 And yf ye finde no trewir verily,
 Wellin ye suffir than that I thus spil,
 And for no manir gilt but my gode will?
 As gode were than untrue as true to be.

117

Explicit.

GODE COUNSAILE OF CHAUCER.

F^LIE fro the prefe and dwell with Sothfastnesse;
Suffise unto thy gode though it be small,
For horde hath hate, and climbyng tikilnesse,
Prece hath envie, and wele is blent oer all;
Savour no more then the behovin shall;
Rede well thy self, that othir folke canst rede,
And trouthe the shall delivir it' is no drede. 7

Paine the not eche crokid to redresse
In trust of her that tournith as a balle;
Grete rest standith in litil businesse;
Beware also to spurne again a nalle;
Strive not as doith a crocke with a walle;
Demith thy self that demist othir's dede,
And trouthe the shall deliver it' is no drede. 14

That the is sent receive in buxomenesse;
The wraßflyng of this worlde askith a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wildirnesse;
Forthe pilgrim, forthe o best out of thy stall;
Loke up on high, and thanke thy God of all;
Weivith thy luste and let thy ghost the lede,
And trouthe the shall delivir it' is no drede. 21

Explicit.

CHAUCE.

ness;

te,

de,

CHAUCE'S A, B, C,

CALLED LA PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.

*Chaucer's A, B, C, called La Priere de nostre Dame, made,
as some say, at the request of Blanch Duchesse of Lanca-
ster, as a praier for her private use, being a woman in
her religion very devout.*

A.

ALMIGHTIE and allmerciabie Quene!
To whom all this world fleith for foccour,
To have relese of sinne, of sorow, of tene,
Glorious Virgine! of all flouris flour,
To the I fle, confoundid in errour;
Helpe and releve, almightie debonaire!
Have mercy of mine perillous langour,
Venquist me hath my cruill adversaire.

8

B.

Bountie so fixe hath in my hert his tent,
That well I wote thou wilt my succour be;
Thou canst not warnin that with gode entent
Axith thyne helpe, thine hert is aye so fre,
Thou art largeffe of plaine felicite,
Havin and refute of quiete and rest;
Lo how that thevis sevin chafin me;
Helpe, Ladie bright! or that mine ship to brest.

16

Qij

C.

Comfort is none but in you, Lady dere!
 For lo! mine sinne and mine confusioun,
 Which ought not in thin presence for to' apere,
 Han taken on me a grevous actioun,
 Of veray right and disperatioun,
 And as by right they mightin well sustene
 That I were worthy mine damnatioun,
 Ne were it of thy mercy, blisfull Quene!

24

D.

Dout is there none, o Quene of mise'ricord!
 That thou n'art cause of grace and mercy here,
 God vouchidesafe through the with us to' accord;
 For certis, Christ'is blisfull modir dere!
 Were now the bow ybent in swiche manere
 As it was first of justice and of ire
 The righfull God would of no mercy here;
 But through the han we grace as we desire.

33

E.

Ever' hath mine hope of refute in the be,
 For here besorne full oft in many' a wise
 Unto mercy hast thou recevid me,
 But mercy, Lady! at the gret assise,
 When we shall come before the High Justise,
 So litil freut shall then in me ben found
 That but thou or that day correctin me
 Of very right mine werke will me confound.

40

F.

Flying I fle for succour to thine tent,
 Me for to hide fro tempest full of drede,
 Beseking you that ye you not absent,
 Though I be wicke: o help yet at this nede!
 All have I ben a best in wit and dede,
 Yet, Lady! thou me close with thine owne grace;
 Thine enemye and mine (Lady, take hede)
 Unto mine deth in point is me to chafe.

G.

Gracious maid and modir! which that never
 Were bittir nor in erth nor in the se,
 But full of swetenesse and of mercy ever,
 Helpe, that mine fadir be not wroth with me;
 Speke thou, for I ne dare him not yse:
 So have I done in erth, alas the while!
 That certis but if thou mine succour be
 To sinke eterne he will mine ghost exile.

H.

He vouchidefese, tell him, as was his will,
 Become a man as for our alliance,
 And with his blode he wrote that blisfull bill
 Upon the crosse as generall acquitaunce
 To every penitent in full cryaunce;
 And therefore, Lady bright! thou for us prey,
 Then shalt thou stentin alle his grevaunce,
 And maken our foe to saylin of his prey.

Qiii

I.

I wotè well thou wilt ben our succour,
 Thou art so full of bountie in certaine,
 For when a foulè fallith in errour
 Thine pitie goeth and halith him againe,
 Then makist thou his pece with his Soverain,
 And bringist him out of the crokid strete :
 Whofo the lovith shall not love in vaine,
 That shall he find as he the life shall lete.

72

K.

Kalendis enluminid ben they
 That in this world ben lightid with thine name,
 And who so goith with the the right wey
 Him dar not dredin in soule to ben lame.
 Now Quene of comfort ! fith thou art the same
 To whom I fechin for my medicine
 Let not mine so no more mine wound entame,
 Mine hele into thine hond all I refine.

80

L.

Lady ! thine sorrow can I not portrey
 Undir the crosse, ne his grevous pennaunce ;
 But for your bothis peine I you do prey
 Let not our aldir so make his bossaunce
 That he hath in his leffis, with mischaunce !
 Convièd that that ye both han bought so dere :
 As I said erst, thou ground of all substaunce !
 Continue' on us thin pitous eyin clere.

88

M.

Moyfes, that saw the bosh of flambis rede
 Brenning, of which then nevir a sticke brend,
 Was signe of thine unwemmid maidinhede;
 Thou art the bosh on which there can descend
 The Holy Ghost, the which that Moyfes wend
 Had ben on fire; and this was in figure;
 Now Lady! fro the fire us defend
 Which that in hell eternally shall dure.

96

N.

Noble Princeffe! that nevir haddist pere,
 Certis if any comfort in us be
 That comith of the, Christis modir dere!
 We han none othir melodie ne gle
 Us to rejoyce in our adversite,
 Ne advocat that will and dare so prey
 For us, and that for as lite hire as ye,
 That helpin for an Ave'mary or twey.

104

O.

O very light of eyin tho ben blind!
 O very lust of labour and distresse!
 O tresorere of bountie to mankind!
 The whom God chese to moder for humbleffe,
 From his ancille he made the maistresse
 Of heven and erth, our bill up for to bede,
 This world awatith ay on thine godenes,
 For thou ne failed'est nevir wight at nede.

112

P.

Purpose I have sometime for to enquire
 Wherefore and why the Holy Ghost the fought;
 When Gabriel's voice come to thine ere
 He not to werre us swich a wondir wrought,
 But for to save us that he sithin bought;
 Then nedith us no wepon us to save,
 But onely there we did not as us ought
 Do penitence, and mercy aske and have.

120

Q.

Quene of comfort! right when I me bethinke
 That I agiltid have both him and the,
 And that mine soule is worthy for to sinke,
 Alas! I caitife, whedir shall I fle?
 Who shall unto thine sonne mine menè be?
 Who but thine selfe, that art of pitie well?
 Thou hast more routh on our adversite
 Than in this world might any tonguè tell.

128

R.

Redresse me, modir! and eke me chastise,
 For certainly my Fadir's chastising
 Ne dare I not abidin in no wise,
 So hidèous is his full reckining.
 Modir! of whom our joy began to spring,
 Be ye mine judge and eke my soul's lech,
 For ay in you is pitie abounding
 To each that will of pity you besech.

136

S.

Soth is that he ne grauntith no pite
 Withoutin the, for God of his godenesse
 Forgivith none but it like unto the:
 He hath the made vicaire and maistresse
 Of all this world, and eke govirneresse
 Of hevin, and reprellith his justise
 Astir thine will, and therefore in witnesse
 He hath the crownid in so royall wise.

144

T.

Temple devout! ther God chese his wonning,
 Fro which these misbeleved deprivid ben,
 To you mine soulè penitent I bring;
 Recceve me, for I can no ferthir fleen.
 With thernis venemous, o hevin Quene!
 For which the erth accursid was full yore,
 I am so woundid, as ye may well sene,
 That I am lost almost, it smert so fore.

152

V.

Virgine! that art so noble' of appaile,
 That ledist us into the highè toure
 Of Paradise, thou me wise and counsaile
 How I may have thy grace and thy succour,
 All have I ben in filth and in errour:
 Lady! on that countrey thou me adjourne
 That clepid is thine bench of freschè flour,
 There as that mercy evir shall sojourne.

160

X.

Xpen thine sonne, that in this world alight
 Upon a crosse to suffir his passioun,
 And suffred eke that Longeus his hert pight,
 And made his hert 'is blodè renne adoun,
 And all this was for my salvatioun;
 And I to him am fals and eke unkind,
 And yet he will not mine dampnatioun;
 This thanke I you, succour of all mankind!

168

Y.

Ysaac was figure of his deth certaine,
 That so ferreforth his fadir would obey
 That him ne rought nothing for to be flaine;
 Right so thy sonnè list a lambe to dey:
 Now Lady full of mercy! I you prey,
 Sith he his mercy furid me so large,
 Be ye not scant, for all we sing or say,
 That ye ben fro vengeance alway our targe.

176

Z.

Zacharie you clepith the opin well
 That wisht his sinfull soule out of his guilt,
 Therefore this lessoun out I will to tell,
 That n'ere thine tendir hert we werin spilt.
 Now Lady bright! sith that thou canst and wilt,
 Ben to the fede of Adam merciable;
 Bring us unto that paleis that is built
 To penitents, that ben to mercie able.

184

Explicit.

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